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# Japanese National Identity and National Security

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**JAPANESE NATIONAL IDENTITY AND  
NATIONAL SECURITY**

**BY**

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B.A., GRACELAND UNIVERSITY  
LAMONI, IOWA 2004**

**A THESIS  
SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR  
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STUDIES AT SETON HALL UNIVERSITY AND THE DEGREE OF MASTER  
OF ARTS IN DIPLOMACY AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AT THE  
JOHN C. WHITEHEAD SCHOOL OF DIPLOMACY AT SETON HALL  
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**JAPANESE NATIONAL IDENTITY AND NATIONAL SECURITY**  
THESIS TITLE


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SETON HALL UNIVERSITY, SOUTH ORANGE, NEW JERSEY.**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis examines the interrelation between national security and nationalism in Japan. Beginning from the stance of classical realism as put forth by Hans Morgenthau, the essay takes a “culturalist” view as its starting point. The culturalist view, in accepting the basic assumptions of classical realism as given, understands that all states act freely and rationally to maximize their interests, defined in terms of power. Power, as Morgenthau points out, is not a fixed concept, its definition being subject to the vicissitudes of time and culture. The culturalist model attempts to understand how each civilization understands power by examining its cultural assumptions. In the present case, we are attempting to understand the ideas undergirding Japanese policymakers in the field of national security.

The essay traces the evolution of the nationalist discourse from its first manifestation in the early Edo period up to its manifestations in contemporary Japan. Since the time of the Meiji Restoration, the thesis argues, the nationalist discourse has been the prominent form of socio-political discussion in Japanese policy circles, and is indispensable to any understanding of the decisions of Japanese policymakers, especially in the area of national security.

The thesis argues that there have been three paradigmatic shifts in Japanese society, all of which have engendered shifts in the nationalist discourse and in security policy. These shifts have been, 1) the Meiji Restoration, 2) defeat in the Pacific War, and 3) the 1991 Gulf War Crisis. The thesis further argues that a shift is now underway in the post-9/11 world. All of these shifts have been undergirded by the ideas of the nationalist discourse, making the study of nationalism in Japan integral to any competent

understanding of Japanese security policy. The essay ends with a discussion of what American policy in the region should be, taking Japanese security policy as a base.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Chapter 2: Contextual Framework	11
a) Theoretical Foundation	12
b) The Nationalist Discourse	20
Chapter 3: Origins and Genesis of the Japanese Nationalist Discourse	27
a) The Tokugawa Era and Pre-Nationalism	28
b) The Meiji Era and the Ascendancy of the Nationalist Discourse	43
c) The Pacific War	52
Chapter 4: Postwar Security and the US-Japan Alliance	56
a) Defeat	57
b) Paternalism and Dependence	70
c) Emerging from the Shadows	78
Chapter 5: Contemporary Nationalism and National Security	83
a) “Resurgent” Nationalism	85
b) Post-Cold War Japan	92
c) National Security in the Post-9/11 World	102
Chapter 6: Conclusions	112
Bibliography	125

## CHAPTER1

### INTRODUCTION

Around the turn of the twentieth century, Kakuzo Okakura (1863-1913) wrote that

The beginning of the twentieth century would have been spared the spectacle of sanguinary warfare if Russia had condescended to know Japan better. What dire consequences to humanity lie in the contemptuous ignoring of Eastern problems.<sup>1</sup>

This warning was almost entirely ignored by the Western powers at the time of its publication, resulting in the blood bath of the Pacific War. Today, this warning still carries weight, as the problems of Asia threaten to destabilize the entirety of the international order. In their forward to the recent book, *Chasing the Sun*, the editors at the Century Foundation echo Kakuzo's warning of the dangers of ignoring Eastern problems. They write,

The world will be quite different if the time comes when Indonesia, Vietnam, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Thailand, and the Philippines – each of which is more populous than France, Britain, or Italy – realize their full economic potential. Indeed, the economic potential of Asia is so great and growth is so rapid that the United States must come to terms with an almost inevitable shift in the global balance of power.<sup>2</sup>

World War II made it impossible for the Western powers to contemptuously ignore Eastern problems. The present thesis is an attempt to understand the problems of one particular Eastern state, Japan, in order to generate a better understanding of its political culture.

The peoples and countries of Asia have long fascinated Western scholars, as well as the general publics of Western countries. Once the colonial powers began their

<sup>1</sup> Kakuzo Okakura, *The Book of Tea* (Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle, 1960), 10.

<sup>2</sup> Forward to Morton Abramowitz and Stephen Bosworth, *Chasing the Sun: Rethinking East Asian Policy* (New York: Century Foundation, 2006), vi.

imperial adventures in the region, however, much of the interest became instrumental or utilitarian; that is, the colonizers delved only far enough into the Asian psyche as was necessary in order to ensure the success of trade and the spreading of the gospel. In the years following World War II, this interest underwent a dramatic shift. As colonialism ended, the West, and especially Western scholars, began to look at the various non-Western cultures on their own terms, rather than through the prism of Western assumptions. The success of this endeavor has been mixed, to say the least,<sup>3</sup> but one area where such thinking seems to have been largely ignored is the field of international relations (IR). While most other fields of social science generally make the attempt to recognize that the various cultures each have their own set of norms and way of viewing the world, IR still maintains a view of the world based entirely upon Western assumptions, and rarely, if ever, acknowledges that non-Western countries may have a different view of how relations between the states should be conducted.

This Western-centric prejudice of IR is not entirely unjustified, since the modern international system is predicated upon the Treaty of Westphalia (1648) which ended the religious wars in Europe. This treaty gave prominence to the notion of sovereignty, leading to the creation of “states,” “that agency within society which possesses the monopoly of legitimate violence.”<sup>4</sup> The world as currently organized boasts nearly two hundred of such states, all internationally recognized as sovereign over their own territories. Given the fact that the various peoples of the world have accepted the state-centric international structure as valid, few would fault IR with being too Western-

<sup>3</sup> For instance, many of the concepts used to “understand cultures on their own terms,” such as pluralism and multiculturalism, are actually themselves Western-centric paradigms and tend to take away from a true understanding of a culture.

<sup>4</sup> Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), 3. Gellner is paraphrasing the widely recognized definition of Max Weber.

centered in its thinking. To be sure, the present work also accepts much of the generally acknowledged IR paradigm as valid. Problems begin to surface in moving from what is universally accepted as legitimate (the state-centric international structure) to what is more controversial (how states should behave, what external constraints are legitimate, what forms of governance are legitimate, and so on). The latter questions, while still being flushed out in IR theory and practice, have yet to find answers that the world populations and their leaders will accept as legitimate. It is at this point of divergence that the present work attempts to join the IR conversation.

We begin in agreement with the most basic assumptions of IR: that states are the primary actors, and that all states act freely and rationally to maximize their own interests. While other actors do have an important part to play in IR, the assumptions stated above are put forth as the most basic and generally accepted by thinkers and practitioners in the field.<sup>5</sup> Taking these basic premises as given, this thesis will explore the cultural assumptions of one country, Japan, in order to understand its process of rationalization, or of decision making. Probably the best way to understand the decision making process is by way of the analogy of a formal logical argument. Examine the following example:

All whales are mammals  
All mammals are Greek  
Therefore, all whales are Greek.

The above argument is *prima facie* valid; that is, it satisfies all the structural requirements of formal logic (proper distribution of terms, non-contradictory, and so on).

<sup>5</sup> This basic stance is one I will call classical realism, from which both neo-realism and neo-liberalism sprang. Both of these later theories take these basic assumptions as given, then add a series of other assumptions specific to their own theories. The added assumptions of these schools, as well as the analytical weakness of the schools themselves, shall be discussed in chapter 2.

Of course, as any school child can see, the argument itself is absurd. The problem is in the premises. In order for any logical argument to be valid (rational), it must satisfy two criteria: first, the logic must be cogent (i.e., it must follow proper structural constraints); second, it must have true premises. The above argument does not have true premises, as not all mammals are Greek; hence, it is false. The only way to validate a premise is to prove its truth, which can be done by another logical argument, or by simple empirical study. Most basically, one can look at a Greek and a whale and see that they have very little in common.<sup>6</sup> However, if one knows none of the three terms in the argument, nor is able to empirically validate said terms, one could, by simply looking at the structure of the argument, accept it as valid. This same analytical negligence appears to be rife in both of the main strands of IR theory, neo-realism and neo-liberalism. Both assume rational, structured behavior, but neither attempts to validate the premises upon which rational decisions are made. A.N. Whitehead calls such analytical negligence the “fallacy of misplaced concreteness.”<sup>7</sup> Stated simply, IR scholars accept their theoretical prism (the argument’s structure) as concrete, never bothering to check the assumptions of the actors (the terms being used).

IR scholars have put forth some sound reasons for this; it is well known that in IR one must often sacrifice parsimony for descriptive accuracy, and vice versa. For instance, the neo-realist assumptions of an anarchic international structure may predict the general behavior of states, but will tell us little about specific instances of state behavior, or about domestic politics. Hence, one is left with a highly generalizable

<sup>6</sup> This analysis can also be done by formal logical arguments which define both mammal and Greek. The definitions would obviously demonstrate that, while all Greeks are mammals, not all mammals are Greek.

<sup>7</sup> A.N. Whitehead, *Process and Reality: Corrected Edition*, ed. David Ray Griffin and Donald W. Sherburne (New York: Free Press, 1978). On pages 7-8, Professor Whitehead defines the “fallacy of misplaced concreteness” as “neglecting the degree of abstraction involved when an actual entity is considered merely so far as it exemplifies certain categories of thought.”

theory, and one which is internally consistent, but which lacks specificity and is largely unable to deal with dramatic change in the international system.<sup>8</sup>

Our present journey into the field of IR is in a wholly opposite direction as that of neo-realism and neo-liberalism, since it is not generalizable outside the specific country and situation analyzed. Such a fact is not necessarily a theoretical weakness; because this thesis is intended to provide a foundation for American policy toward Japan, specificity is certainly warranted. Starting from a foundation of classical realism, this thesis takes a “culturalist” approach to a very specific situation, namely, attempting to understand the cultural assumptions upon which Japanese security policy is made. In order to do so, we will necessarily have to understand the civilization from which these assumptions arise. One could look at this as a series of logical steps, an exercise in defining terms; the terms in need of definition are the cultural assumptions that undergird the decisions of Japanese policymakers. The essay will not be ignoring external factors, as these are very important to any full understanding of the policymaking process; however, external factors should be understood, in keeping with the analogy of the formal argument, as the structure of the argument into which our terms must go. One cannot place terms in the argument until one understands the meaning of the terms. A conversation without definitions is nothing more than incoherent babbling.

“Japanese culture” is an expansive concept, which does not easily lend itself to analysis. Given this, we will further narrow the scope of our discussion to the analysis of what we are calling the “Japanese nationalist discourse.” While there are a number of other strains of thought in Japanese society which may reflect the contemporary culture

<sup>8</sup> Neo-realism, for instance, cannot describe the pre-Westphalian world system, and will be largely useless if the Westphalian system gives way to a new mode of international structure.



as well as the nationalist discourse does, the latter appears to be the most enduring and virulent strain of conversation in Japanese socio-political culture.<sup>9</sup> As such, it is the most fruitful and influential conversation for any study of Japanese security policy. The Japanese nationalists have long had a significant and specific influence upon the formulation of Japanese security policy, reflecting long-standing assumptions and values of Japanese culture. The basic question of this thesis is: *What is the effect of the nationalist discourse on Japanese security policy?*

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Studies in the field commonly assume that, at least since 1951, Japan's security policy follows nearly in lock-step with the security policy of the United States. While this is generally true, the reasons often given for this synchronization paint Japanese policymakers as weak and ineffectual. Such assumptions are not only false, but dangerous. Japanese policymakers, basing their decisions upon long-standing cultural assumptions, certainly have an agenda, which they have been consistently pursuing since before the Meiji Restoration in 1868. These thinkers well understand the international system and, as we shall see, are making the attempt to lead it in a direction conducive to the security and pride of the Japanese nation. The goals and assumptions of these policymakers are easily discernable from a study of the nationalist discourse, an area usually dismissed by mainstream scholars as either a fringe movement, an anachronism, or both. The nationalist discourse in Japan is neither; rather, it is a pervasive and influential strand of thinking in Japanese policy, which is critical to any understanding of Japanese security policy.

The question addressed in this essay leads to a number of other questions, mostly of definitions. As such, this thesis could rightly be seen as a series of interconnected

<sup>9</sup> This assertion will be discussed in detail in chapter 3.

definitions, strung together to better understand the conversation at hand. The conversation concerns Japanese security policy, and our definitions are an attempt to ensure a clear understanding in order to engender a fruitful discussion.

Chapter two will introduce the contextual framework, which undergirds the work as a whole. It begins by presenting the “culturalist model” of international relations. This model works as a compliment to classical realism and is not a competing theory in its own right. In keeping with the analogy of a logical argument, the international order described by classical realism is the structure of the argument, whereas the culturalist model helps to define the terms to ensure that the premises are true. Why this model is analytically superior to the two offshoots of classical realism, neo-liberalism and neo-realism, shall also be addressed in this section. After introducing the culturalist model, we will set about defining the terms necessary for a cogent understanding of the work; specifically, the terms “nationalism” and “nationalist discourse” will be addressed, as will their relation to the culturalist model. Here we will also look at the necessity of addressing nationalism in policy studies, a discussion which is necessary, given the tendency to write off nationalism as either a fringe anachronistic movement, or a reactionary one.

In chapter three we will examine the origins and development of the nationalist discourse in Japanese thought. Nationalism in Japan, as in all nation-states, has a long, coherent history, dating back as far as the Edo period, before Japan fully joined the rest of the world. As will be discussed in this chapter, those who can be grouped into the Japanese nationalist discourse fall on both sides of the spectrum, from left wing to right wing and everything in between. Often divergent in their political and social views, they

share many of the same cultural assumptions, and generally share the same view of Japan's place in international affairs, placing them together in the nationalist discourse. The assumptions and their manifestations will be introduced and addressed in this section.

In tracing the origins and development of Japanese nationalist discourse in this section, we will begin with the Edo period and work up to the Pacific War and the rise of what has been dubbed "ultra-nationalism." One thing that will become apparent is the continuity of the substance of the discourse itself. While Japanese society has undergone a number of profound changes, from the Meiji Restoration, to the Pacific War, to its contemporary regional milieu, the undergirding of the nationalist discourse has remained the same. This consistency, found in no other social discourse in Japan (i.e., Marxism, Liberalism, Conservatism, and so on; all of which have had some influence),<sup>10</sup> gives credence to the assumption that the nationalist discourse is key to understanding Japanese policy decisions, including security policy.

Chapter four will concentrate on the defeat of Japan in the Pacific War and the ensuing Occupation by the United States. The nationalist discourse at this time did not disappear, though it did alter some of its core assumptions, moving from militaristic nationalism to economic nationalism. The reasons for this change, as well as the ramifications, shall be addressed here. Furthermore, this chapter will attempt to clean up some of the muddled thinking so prevalent in looking at postwar Japanese culture, which will be done by looking at some oft-misused concepts, such as "pacifism" and

<sup>10</sup> It should be pointed out that nationalism is often lumped with conservatism. This essay will attempt to demonstrate that this idea is false, as thinkers as varied as the liberal Fukuzawa, and the conservatives of the Meiji era, as well as Marxists and Pacifists, have all participated in the nationalist discourse.

“antimilitarism.” Also in this chapter, we will introduce the concept of comprehensive security, an idea that continues to undergird Japanese security policy to this day.

Chapter five will look at the dynamism of Japanese nationalism and security policy over the past two and a half decades. As the Japanese grew in economic clout and international prestige, the country saw a resurgence of the nationalist discourse in the early 1980s, and again in the early years of the current century. The two major international events of the last decade and a half, the end of the Cold War and 9/11, both had profound effects on the nationalist discourse and Japanese security policy. The events of 9/11 and its aftermath have had especially important ramifications for Japan’s culture of antimilitarism as well as the future of the Self-Defense Forces. All of this will be examined in this chapter.

The final chapter will contain the conclusions. Here, the essay will review the points made and reiterate the importance of the nationalist discourse and its relation to Japanese security policy. After doing so, three things will be addressed in brief. First, American policy in East Asia<sup>11</sup> will be discussed. While the thesis does not purport to describe the whole of the East Asian countries’ assumptions, in understanding Japanese security policy, the American policymaker, taking classical realism as a base, can formulate better, more functional policies for American interests in the region. As will be discussed, the most effective way to ensure the protection of American interests in the region may be to move toward a more equal alliance with Japan, based upon mutual cultural understanding and trust.

<sup>11</sup> The term “East Asia,” as it is being used in this thesis, indicates the countries of both Northeast Asia (Japan, China, North Korea, South Korea, and so on) and the countries of Southeast Asia (the ASEAN nations, Australia, and so on). When either the countries of “Northeast Asia” or “Southeast Asia” are meant specifically, these terms will be used. Furthermore, “Asia” is used to indicate the whole of the continent.

The second matter to be addressed will be the problems of continued instability in East Asia, and in Asia in general. The region is home to a number of established and rising powers, all jealous of their own interests in the region. Since the end of the Cold War, Asia has been marked by increasing economic interdependence and political uncertainty. In this section, we will address some of these issues, including the uncertainty of the future of the region as a whole. This uncertainty makes policy proscriptions more difficult, though not impossible. The final part of this chapter will deal with possibilities for future study. Nationalism remains a controversial and understudied field, easily lending itself to deeper probing. Some possible areas for deeper probing will be put forth here.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **CONTEXTUAL FRAMEWORK**

The central assumption of this thesis, that an understanding of the nationalist discourse in Japan is pivotal to any thorough understanding of the national security decisions of the Japanese government, is full of problems. As in most theoretical works, these problems are primarily of definitions; what do we mean by “nationalism,” “security,” or a “culturalist model” of international relations? An understanding of these terms as they are here being used is necessary to follow the arguments. Thus, the present chapter is dedicated to the elucidation of two primary concepts: “nationalism” and the “culturalist model.”

Before proceeding to the task at hand, one caveat, concerning the nature of the thesis and the definitions used therein, should be addressed up front. Said definitions are theoretical, not operational definitions; the former kind of definition, which is more problematic and less concrete than the latter, is best in keeping with the nature of this thesis. The current work is one of historical analysis, as opposed to the more positivistic methods currently popular in the social sciences. Where positivism relies primarily upon quantified data to support a highly specific hypothesis, a work of historical analysis makes use of qualified definitions in order to discover answers to more open-ended questions. Studies using quantified methods tend to make extensive use of statistics, whereas those utilizing methods of historical analysis are prone to data which is not so straightforward and requires more analytical interpretation. This is not meant to deride the studies coming out of the positivist school; rather, it is an acknowledgement that the current topic simply does not lend itself to such a method.

## Theoretical Foundation

It is prudent that the first topic to be addressed is the model which will undergird the thesis. As it is being used here, the culturalist model is not a stand-alone theory, but a complement to the classical realist theory of international relations. Desch explains:

...cultural variables are more than epiphenomena to material factors and often explain outcomes for which realism cannot account. Because no proponent of realism thinks that realist theories explain everything, there will be little argument about culture, or any other variables, supplementing realism. The major debate will concern whether cultural theories can supplant realist theories. To make the case that cultural theories should supplant existing theories, the new culturalists would have to demonstrate that their theories outperform realist theories in “hard cases” for cultural theories...most new culturalists do not employ such cases.<sup>1</sup>

No attempt at such a case will be made here; rather, the current essay is an attempt to demonstrate the congruity of classical realism with the culturalist model by utilizing the example of Japanese nationalism and national security. Before attempting to do so, a short discussion of classical realism and its two theoretical competitors is warranted.

In his seminal work, *Politics Among Nations*, Hans Morgenthau laid out six precepts upon which he based his theory of international politics, which he called “realism.” The first five of these are of direct importance to the current discussion:

1. Political realism believes that politics, like society in general, is governed by objective laws that have their roots in human nature....
2. The main signpost that helps political realism to find its way through the landscape of international politics is the concept of interest defined in terms of power....
3. Realism assumes that its key concept of interest defined as power is an objective category which is universally valid, but it does not endow that concept with a meaning that is fixed once and for all....
4. Political realism is aware of the moral significance of political action....

<sup>1</sup> Michael C. Desch, “Culture Clash: Assessing the Importance of Ideas in Security Studies,” *International Security* 23, no. 1 (Summer 1998): 144.

5. Political realism refuses to identify the moral aspirations of a particular nation with the moral laws that govern the universe.<sup>4</sup>

Classical realism makes three simple assumptions about the international system: it assumes that the primary actors are states; that said actors act in a free and rational manner in order to maximize their own interests; and that these interests are primarily defined in terms of power. To return to the analogy of a logical argument, the actors are the people participating in the argument, while the “objective laws that have their roots in human nature” are the structural constraints of the argument itself; just as the logician is constrained by the necessity of creating a cogent argument, the actors attempting to maximize their interests are constrained by the very nature of the international system.

The concept of interest defined as power also needs some clarification. Morgenthau makes clear that, while power is the primary concern of states, each state may interpret power in its own way. This understanding of the malleability of power has been one of the main criticisms of the neo-liberal school, which maintains that states no longer seek power as such, but seek cooperation for the welfare of the world as a whole. Keohane explains quite eloquently:

Were this [the realist] portrayal of world politics correct, any cooperation that occurs would be derivative from overall patterns of conflict. Alliance cooperation would be easy to explain as a result of the operation of a balance of power, but system-wide patterns of cooperation that benefit many countries without being tied to an alliance system directed against an adversary would not. If international politics were a state of war, institutionalized patterns of cooperation of the basis of shared purposes would not exist except as part of a larger struggle for power. The extensive patterns of international agreements we observe on issues as diverse as trade, financial relations, health, telecommunications, and environmental protection would be absent.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau and Kenneth W. Thompson, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985), 4, 5, 10, 12 and 13.

<sup>3</sup> Robert O. Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 7.



Keohane argues that massive, across-the-board cooperation seen in international politics today would not be possible within the realist framework. Such criticism is based primarily upon a mistake view of the term “power.” Keohane appears to make the assumption that “power” is a unilateral, zero-sum phenomenon wherein one state directly controls the actions of others. This “state of war” understanding of power fails to take into account Morgenthau’s third point, that the definition of power is not fixed on the international scene. Morgenthau himself defines power in terms of “influence,” which he sees as derived from the “tendency to dominate” found in all human societies and associations.<sup>4</sup> If we look at the cooperative tendencies of the present era, we can see clear validation of Morgenthau’s theory of power maximization. The US dollar is the primary currency in the world economy; the American economy is the driving force for the world economy; American pop culture feeds hungry consumers in all parts of the world; and even the much-lauded cooperative institutions bear the mark of American influence, e.g., the United Nations (UN) headquarters sits on American soil, the World Trade Organization (WTO) is based upon rules crafted by American diplomats. When power, especially in the current age of “soft power,” is understood in terms of influence and not necessarily military domination or territory controlled, the realist argument maintains its ascendancy over the neo-liberal view.<sup>5</sup>

From the other side of the ideological spectrum comes another dissenting theory: neo-realism. Neo-realism derives its primary assumptions from the anarchic nature of the international system, taking as given that all state actions are determined by the

<sup>4</sup> Morgenthau and Thompson, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 39.

<sup>5</sup> A savvy reader may point out that the prevalence of United States-based Multi-National Corporations (MNCs) takes away from the role of state as the primary actor. It should be understood, however, that these MNCs are still subject to American laws and customs, maintaining the integrity of the argument.

international structure, resulting in an extended continuity across time and politics. As Waltz observed, "The enduring anarchic character of international politics accounts for the striking sameness in the quality of international life through the millennia."<sup>6</sup> Even without addressing this statement from a theoretical standpoint, the *prima facie* absurdity of the idea should be quite clear. If this statement were true, then a direct comparison among the Mongol Empire, the Holy Roman Empire, and liberal democratic ~~republics currently in vogue~~ would be warranted. However, the only apparent comparison would be that they were all states of a sort. Waltz, of course, does not shy away from the abstract nature of his theory:

Abstracting from the attributes of units means leaving aside questions about the kinds of political leaders, social and economic institutions, and ideological commitments states may have. Abstracting from relations means leaving aside questions about the cultural, economic, political, and military interactions of states.... To define a structure requires ignoring how units relate with one another (how they interact) and concentrating on how they stand in relation to one another (how they are arranged or positioned).<sup>7</sup>

Such abstractions serve only to produce more problems than they solve. Waltz, like Morgenthau before him, cites human nature as the basis of his assumptions. "States," he writes, "like people, are insecure in proportion to the extent of their freedom."<sup>8</sup> If such were true, then states, when looking at the anarchic, "self-help" nature of the world, would be disinclined to enter into long-term cooperative relationships, especially those so widespread in the current international system. Here, Keohane's neo-liberal critique appears to answer the neo-realist assumptions with a resounding "no." That so many states have entered into cooperative relationships seems to indicate that these actors value

<sup>6</sup> Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1979), 66.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 112.

something more than freedom; in keeping with classical realism, we can here posit that the one thing states value more than freedom is power.

Aside from the innate theoretical problems of both neo-liberalism and neo-realism, the two share a simple problem of utility; that is, both lack the analytical power of predictability. Katzenstein agrees:

The main analytical perspectives on international relations, neo-realism and neo-liberalism, share with all their critics the inability to foreshadow, let alone foresee....momentous international changes.<sup>9</sup>

Both neo-realism and neo-liberalism are predicated upon stasis. Neo-realism assumes that all actors, being conditioned by the world structure, are nearly identical and will act as such. Neo-liberalism, on the other hand, is predicated upon the idea of continued integration of the world into a single interconnected whole. Neither of these theories can predict change because they assume that dramatic change is either impossible (neo-realism) or too costly to be actualized (neo-liberalism). Furthermore, while both make for good academic arguments, they lack utility in the world of policymaking because they both tend to disregard the individuality of the states themselves. Keohane himself states that “institutional [neo-liberal] theory takes states’ conception of their interests as exogenous: unexplained within the lens of the theory....Nor does [neo-]realism predict interests.”<sup>10</sup> Katzenstein, in discussing this quotation, notes that, “without a theory of

<sup>9</sup> Peter J. Katzenstein, “Introduction: Alternative Perspectives on National Security,” in *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identities in World Politics*, ed. Peter J. Katzenstein (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 3.

<sup>10</sup> Robert O. Keohane, “Institutional Theory and the Realist Challenge after the Cold War,” quoted in *ibid.*, 13-14. The author’s bracketed “neo” is valid in that Keohane seems to lump neo-realism with classical realism. Given the context of the statement, he appears to be generally indicating the former rather than the latter theory.

interests, which requires analysis of domestic politics, no theory of international relations can be fully adequate.”<sup>11</sup> It is here that the culturalist model comes into play.

Taking as a basis that all states act in a free and rational manner in order to maximize their interests, defined in terms of power, the culturalist model attempts to explain the domestic, or cultural, factors that partially define the interests at play. In agreement with Morgenthau that all states are the primary actors, and that all seek power, the culturalist model recognizes that not all states define power in the same manner.

While the traditional Westphalian state may define power in terms of military prowess and sovereign integrity over a territory, a state in the current international system may define power in terms of economic prowess and cultural integrity over time and across borders. The notion of power as influence is not diminished by such a distinction; rather it is a recognition that power is not a “concept with a meaning that is fixed once and for all.”

While the above discussion may be far too brief to truly do justice to the debate among these theoretical perspectives, it is sufficient, for the purposes of the present work, in that it demonstrates the theoretical primacy of classical realist theory in comparison to its rivals. Given this, the time has come to define the culturalist model in more depth. Eckstein gives an excellent, if somewhat verbose, definition of the culturalist model. He states that,

...“cultural” people process experience into action through general cognitive, affective, and evaluative predispositions; the patterns of study of such predispositions vary from society to society, from social segment to social segment; they do not vary because objective social situations or structures vary but because of culturally determined learning; early learning conditions later learning and learning involves a process of seeking coherence on dispositions.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 13.

And this is so in order to “economize” in decisions to act and to achieve predictability in social situations.<sup>12</sup>

The culturalist attempts to understand the “predispositions” of the given culture in order to better understand why certain decisions are reached rather than others, or why certain ideas or goods are preferred over others, and, hence, to make predictions for policy application. Ruth Benedict explains it more eloquently: “The lenses through which any nation looks at life are not the ones another nation uses. It is hard to be conscious of the eyes through which one looks.”<sup>13</sup>

In looking at specific cultures, the culturalist model begins to run into problems, as the results found are often not generalizable beyond the culture of inquiry. This is not necessarily a problem, however, when the model is seen as a complement to classical realism. All states strive to maximize their power (realism), but what each state sees as viable power or how it wishes to maximize this power is the particular question that needs answering (culturalist). Furthermore, given that the primary aim here is not simply academic description but to form a basis for policy choices, the lack of generalizable hypotheses outside the culture under study is largely irrelevant. In the language of international relations theory, we are interested in descriptive accuracy, not parsimony.

That Japanese national security is the subject of inquiry in this thesis is particularly fitting. First, the Japanese are one of the most culturally and racially homogenous peoples in the world today, despite the highly cosmopolitan nature of Japan’s major cities and its hyperactivity on the international scene. As one observer noted:

<sup>12</sup> Harry Eckstein, “A Culturalist Theory of Political Change,” *American Political Science Review* 82, no. 3 (September 1988): 792.

<sup>13</sup> Ruth Benedict, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword: Patterns of Japanese Culture* (Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1946), 14.

By comparison with Japan, even nations such as Italy or Germany that Americans usually think of as homogenous, are hotbeds of ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity...[the Japanese are] members of a single great tribe united not just by common citizenship or common language but by common bloodlines, common racial memory and common tribal codes, some of which stretch all the way back into its prehistory.<sup>14</sup>

Geographic isolation and well as centuries of cultural semi-isolation have helped to create and reinforce such a worldview. Even in today's highly internationalized world, the Japanese still maintain the view of themselves as a unique people with a culture all their own. Such sentiments make Japan and its people exceptional targets for studies of the culturalist kind.<sup>15</sup>

National security is another area where the culturalist model is exceptionally applicable. The prevailing view in international relations tends to be the neo-realist one when issues of security are addressed; that is, it is assumed that questions of national security are "objectively" answerable based on the actions and reactions of the various actors on the scene. In such a situation, cultural understandings are irrelevant, as simply watching the security environment will tell the inquirer all he or she needs to know. Thinking of this sort is rather off the mark, as states do often differ in their reactions to matters of national security. For example, witness the Japanese reluctance to begin to rearm during the Korean War, despite the best efforts of American policymakers and the fact that the war carried great implications for the future of Japan, as opposed to the

<sup>14</sup> Robert C. Christopher, *The Japanese Mind: The Goliath Explained* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1983), 45, 51.

<sup>15</sup> Japan has several large minority groups, including the Ainu in the north, the Okinowans (who tend to see themselves as different from the Japanese), Koreans, Chinese, and other smaller groups. The existence of these groups does not take away from the reality of overall cultural homogeneity; framed another way, all nations contain in them minority groups, but those extant in Japan have relatively less cultural and racial influence than in comparable republics. For more information regarding minority groups in Japan, see, Tomiyama Ichiro, "On Becoming 'a Japanese': The Community of Oblivion and Memories of the Battlefield," trans. Noah McCormack, (October 26, 2005) *Japan Focus*, [www.japanfocus.org](http://www.japanfocus.org) (accessed: October 31, 2006).

participation of the Japanese Self-Defense Force (SDF) in Cambodia in 1991 and its current commitment in Iraq,<sup>16</sup> two areas much further away, where existential security threats were almost non-existent. In order to fully understand the motives of Japanese policy in these situations, one has to understand, in addition to the historical circumstances of the situation, how the Japanese define their national interests and national security. Katenstein notes:

State interests do not exist to be “discovered” by self-interested rational actors. Interests are constructed through a process of social interaction...[Hence] security interests are defined by actors who respond to cultural factors.<sup>17</sup>

### **The Nationalist Discourse**

It is the point of this thesis to understand the assumptions being made and the interests being constructed in order to better facilitate an understanding of Japanese policy choices in the area of national security. Specifically, we are trying to understand this policy through what we may call the “nationalist discourse” in Japanese politics.

Nationalism is a subject treated with much derision in scholarly circles, for a number of reasons. Many see it as an anachronism, a throwback to the xenophobic and racist days of yore. As Elie Kedourie remarked, “Nationalism makes use of the past to subvert the present.”<sup>18</sup> Such sentiments seem endemic in studies of nationalism. Even the more sympathetic scholars tend to think of nationalism as a passing stage, an adolescence of sorts, in the process of social evolution towards modernity. According to Narin, most scholars view nationalism as “an inwardly-determined social necessity, a

<sup>16</sup> Of course, Japanese soldiers in Iraq are hardly in harm’s way. Often stationed in secure areas for reconstruction projects, these troops are protected by other coalition forces.

<sup>17</sup> Katenstein, “Introduction: Alternative Prospects on National Security,” 2.

<sup>18</sup> Elie Kedourie, “Nationalism and Self-Determination,” in *Nationalism* ed. John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 51.

'growth-stage' located somewhere between traditional or 'feudal' societies and a future where the factors of nationality will become less prominent (or anyway less troublesome in human history)."<sup>19</sup> Much more critical is the ideological stance of Michael Walzer, who calls nationalism "the new tribalism," declaring with self-righteous horror that "the tribes have returned."<sup>20</sup> In looking at Japanese nationalism, Tessa Morris-Suzuki shares the sentiments of this school. She states that,

...the introspective fascination with "Japanese culture" is also, I think, an ironic result of the enormously rapid process of change which has transformed every aspect of the Japanese lifestyle – housing, clothes, transport, working habits, leisure, language – over the past hundred years.<sup>21</sup>

To some thinkers, nationalism is seen not just a reactionary resurgence of xenophobia, but also as the result of opportunistic doings on the part of powerful interests and parties. Such seems to be the predominant view of nationalism in Japan. Morris-Suzuki maintains that "the notion of "national culture" is an ideological construct which, both in Europe and Japan, emerged with the rise of the modern nation state and helped to serve the demands of the state for social integration."<sup>22</sup>

That such thinking is prevalent in studies of Japanese nationalism is the result of the stringently hierarchical and state-centric structure of Japanese society up to the end of World War II, even, in some ways, continuing into the present day. For several thousands years, the Imperial house was an object of veneration, even worship, as its halls supposedly held the descendant of the Sun herself in the form of a god-king. This

<sup>19</sup>Tom Narin, "The Maladies of Development," in *Nationalism* ed. John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 72.

<sup>20</sup>Michael Walzer, "The New Tribalism: Notes on a Difficult Problem," in *The Nationalism Reader*, ed. Omar Dahbour and Micheline R. Ishay (Amherst: Humanity Books, 1999), 322.

<sup>21</sup> Tessa Morris-Suzuki, "The Invention and Reinvention of "Japanese Culture," *Journal of Asian Studies*, 54, no. 3 (August 1995): 772.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 776.



coalesced, during the Meiji era, into the theory of the “family state,”<sup>23</sup> with the emperor at the head as the father figure. This idea does still exist in Japan, even among many of the country’s top policymakers.<sup>24</sup>

These two theoretical assumptions, nationalism as reaction and as social control, are not wholly off the mark. To be sure, modern nationalism often takes the form of reactionary xenophobia to the apparently inevitable march of globalization. And, during the formative years of the nation states, the leaders of many countries did use patriotic rhetoric to shore up support for their fledgling governments, an act which still continues today in weak states and amongst politicians with a populist bent. However, to dismiss the entirety of the nationalist dialogue due to such facts is analytically sloppy and does more to demonstrate the political leanings of such scholars than to buttress their claims of objectivity in looking at the phenomenon. Besides, many people who consider themselves to be nationalists are neither racist nor xenophobic; rather, as Eugene Matthews points out in *Foreign Affairs* magazine:

The mainstream nationalists [in Japan] simply want Japan to have the respect, political influence and power commensurate with being the world’s second most important economy and a major contributor to world affairs.<sup>25</sup>

These sentiments are generalizable across the nationalist spectrum; that is, most nationalists, whatever their home country, feel a deep devotion to their country and wish to see it take pride of place in world affairs. This does not necessarily imply xenophobic leanings or racist actions, as much of the modern scholarship would have us believe. Of course, it does not necessarily exclude them either.

<sup>23</sup>Kosaku Yoshino, *Cultural Nationalism in Contemporary Japan* (London: Routledge, 1992), 26.

<sup>24</sup> See, Onishi, Norimitsu, “To Japanese Nationalists, Only the Y Chromosome Counts,” *New York Times*, March 12, 2006.

<sup>25</sup> Eugene A. Matthews, “Japan’s New Nationalism,” *Foreign Affairs* 82, no. 6 (November/December 2003), 86.

To say that nationalism is a reactionary stance against modernity is also somewhat tautological, as the nation-state itself, the necessary condition for the rise of nationalism, is an invention of modernity. However, to say that the communal ties felt by those who can properly be labeled nationalists are also a new phenomenon would most certainly be false. Human beings have always felt a special connection to their own kin-groups and to the greater civilizations which help to create the character of the people within their domains. Witness, for instance, Socrates' willingness to end his life for a love of Athens and of her democratic ethos, though the people themselves pronounced his sentence. Witness, too, the countless soldiers who have died in the various wars over the millennia in the name of God and country, for a cause greater than themselves. Many modern scholars, such as those quoted above, seem content to dismiss these people as poor fools, condemned by their ignorance to sacrifice themselves for no greater good than the ambitions of their own masters. Such thinking is superficial at best, and helps primarily to take away from a deeper understanding of history and the cultural motives of those who came before us.

Nationalism, as it shall be used here, should be understood as belonging to an "imagined political community,"<sup>26</sup> along with the desire to see said community flourish in its own right. This definition of nationalism is partially derived from that given by Benedict Anderson, who gives two important qualifiers to his definition, both of which are valuable here.

The nation is imagined as *limited* because even the largest of them, encompassing perhaps a billion living human beings, has finite, if elastic boundaries, beyond which lie other nations....

<sup>26</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1983), 6.

...it is imagined as *community*, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always as a deep, horizontal relationship.<sup>27</sup>

The nation is a sort of large kinship group, wherein all members belong to an extended family that imagines common cultural traits and understandings. Nationalists, in this analogy, want to see their kin happy and healthy, to grow and prosper. Yoshino states this idea in more scientific language. He writes that, “The common denominators of nationalism are the belief among a people that it comprises a distinct community with distinctive characteristics and the will to maintain and enhance that distinctiveness within an autonomous state.”<sup>28</sup>

Japan is a country that many see as highly susceptible to nationalistic sentiments.

As one scholar observed:

Japan’s relative cultural homogeny, apparently natural geographic boundaries, isolation from much of the outside world between the mid-seventeenth and the mid-nineteenth centuries and its imperial house have seemed to indicate the inevitability of national consciousness.<sup>29</sup>

It may be for this reason that nationalism in Japan has enjoyed such favor across the political spectrum and through the years. In most parts of the world, nationalism is often associated with conservative groups or with right-wing politicians. In Japan, however, the nationalist discourse is one which encompasses all parts of the political spectrum and does not appear to be limited to any particular social group.

It is the idea of the “national discourse” which shall be our final definition before proceeding to the meat of the essay. Sandra Wilson elucidates,

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>28</sup> Yoshino, *Cultural Nationalism in Contemporary Japan*, 6.

<sup>29</sup> Sandra Wilson, “Rethinking Nation and Nationalism in Japan,” in *Nation and Nationalism in Japan*, ed. Sandra Wilson (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2002), 1.

At its most basic, nationalism can be understood as a form of discourse – a discourse which links a variety of projects, policies and movements undertaken in the name of the nation...a discourse that constantly shapes our consciousness and the way we constitute the meaning of the world.<sup>30</sup>

The nationalist discourse shall be the focal point of our study. In essence, nationalism is a large conversation, encompassing all people who may see themselves, as Yoshino said, “compromising a distinct community with distinctive characteristics” and who have “the will to maintain and enhance that distinctiveness.” This is quite a broad definition, to be sure, and encompasses a large number of people who may not otherwise consider themselves nationalists. However, such a definition of nationalism as discourse frees us from many of the problems often associated with studies of nationalism. First, this identification allows us to eschew any particular form of nationalist ideology within a state. For instance, a socialistic nationalist would have had a different view of what the Japanese nation should look like than a conservative member of the emperor’s Privy Council. Both of these individuals shared a common desire to see their community, that is, Japan, flourish and grow, but they had different views on what the country should ultimately look like.

Another advantage of the idea of nationalism as discourse is the temporal freedom it allows. Many critics of nationalism point out that nationalists tend to look back to a “golden age,” a primordial era when the purity of the in-group was unquestionable. For many nationalists in the United States, this would be the time of the Founding Fathers, whereas the Nazis looked to the time of the Aryans. Critics often point out that each generation of nationalists views its golden age differently and that these views are almost always highly romanticized versions of history. Nationalism as discourse, however, frees

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 2.

us from having to pick any single model of a golden age for a referent; rather, we can see that the conversation is largely *sui generis*, unique to each generation, though each maintains the desire to see the greatness of the nation itself maximized. This is not to say that there is no continuity to the discourse; rather, it is a recognition that each generation of nationalists will describe its golden age using contemporary terms and concepts. As Heraclitus said, if a cow could paint, it would paint its gods to be cows.

The present thesis will make use of this discourse in the attempt to understand the genesis and future of Japanese policy in the area of national security. National security, given its existential importance to a nation, often attracts the most attention of nationalist thinkers. This is very much the case in Japan, where, as we shall see, the nationalists are becoming more vocal in this area of policy.

### CHAPTER 3

#### ORIGINS AND GENESIS OF THE JAPANESE NATIONALIST DISCOURSE

Japanese society and culture has undergone a striking evolution over the past century and a half. In transforming itself from an isolated, feudal, agrarian society into a modern military state, and then into a powerful and rich republic, the country has undertaken a great deal of introspective analysis, attempting to decipher not only the definition of "Japanese," but also of the place of Japan in the greater world order. Most of this conversation has been undertaken in the form of what we are here calling the nationalist discourse. Many of the questions asked by the Japanese leaders and people concern ways to make Japan a great, thriving, modern nation and to ensure the recognition they feel the country deserves on the international scene.

These introspective questions serve as the basis for our culturalist inquiry. The culturalist model recognizes that, while identities change, the underlying cultural assumptions never appear *ex nihilo*, but are the product of a long period of evolution and will continue to manifest even after the conditions which gave them rise have ceased to exist. For instance, the Tokugawa-imposed social hierarchy continues to have residual effects upon the socio-political culture of Japan, though the Edo period has long past.

Harry Eckstein elaborates:

...social discontinuity never is total— intimate social units, like family, survive the greatest upheavals (may, indeed, be strengthened by them, as refuges of predictable order); so too do structures that are supposedly merely instrumental—for example, bureaucracies. As well, if learning is cumulative, older people should exhibit a good deal of orientational inertia even when traumatic socioeconomic change occurs. We may surely suppose that the more ingrained orientations are and the more they are consonant systems, the less susceptible they are to "disorientation."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Eckstein, "A Culturalist Theory of Political Change," 796.

Change does occur, to be sure, and can often be quite dramatic, but it is usually that of form and rather than substance, as underlying cultural assumptions are quite resilient and tend to change at a glacial rate. Such will be well demonstrated by the changes that riveted Japanese society from the arrival of Commodore Perry in 1853, to the Meiji Restoration, all the way to Japan's defeat in the Pacific War; all of these events, while significant markers of social change, prove that change is often slow and measured.

### **The Tokugawa Era and Pre-Nationalism**

To say that the nationalist discourse began during the middle of the Tokugawa period (1603-1867) may seem, on the surface, quite mistaken. This was, after all, the time of Japan's self-isolation (begun in 1639), and a time when the necessary condition for the existence of nationalism, an awareness of the place of one's country in the international order, was mostly absent. Furthermore, this was a time when the primary loyalty of the general populace was to its local *daimyo*, and not necessarily to either the emperor at Kyoto or the shogun at Edo. Being that this was before the cult of the emperor developed, most people were largely unaware of the doings of the royal family. There were, however, the building blocks for what later became the nationalist discourse. W.G. Beasley explains:

Long before the Japanese embraced nationalism in the modern sense there was a well-established convention among them that Japan was a single state, subject ultimately to one monarchical authority. Its people had a common language, a broadly unified culture, and social institutions which were substantially similar in different parts of the country. There were no significant racial minorities.

Consequently, the approach to nationalism did not entail ways to distinguish “Japanese” from other potential nations within the same territory.<sup>2</sup>

Edo Japan definitely possessed the precursors to nationalism: a sense of racial and cultural uniqueness shared by the general populace. The only missing piece was an awareness of other nations with which the Japanese could compare themselves. Once Japan was confronted with the “superior civilizations”<sup>3</sup> of the West, this changed and the population began to experience modern nationalism.

For most of its history, Japan had looked to another “superior civilization” as a model for its cultural and social institutions. In the fifth century of the Common Era, immigrants from both Korea and China brought to Japan portions of their Sinic culture, including Buddhism, Confucianism, poetry, and a variety of other cultural ideas. Indeed, there was hardly an area of Japanese life that did not undergo a profound transformation with the advent of Chinese learning. The influence of Chinese culture on Japanese thought is hard to overemphasize, as it remained the primary form of education and social organization for over a thousand years. That began to change during the mid-Tokugawa era with the *kokugaku*, or National Learning movement.

In 1728, Kada no Azumamaro (1669–1736) presented to Shogun Tokugawa Yoshimune (1684-1751) a “Petition for the Establishment of a School for National Learning,” wherein he lamented that the “false doctrines [of the Confucians and Buddhists] are rampant” throughout the schools in Japan.<sup>4</sup> He stated that,

<sup>2</sup> W. G. Beasley, “The Edo Experience and Japanese Nationalism,” *Modern Asian Studies* 18, no. 4 (1984): 555.

<sup>3</sup> Bob Tadashi Wakabayashi, Introduction to *Modern Japanese Thought*, ed. Bob Tadashi Wakabayashi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 30.

<sup>4</sup> Kada no Azumamaro, “Petition for the Establishment of a School for National Learning,” in *Sources of Japanese Tradition, Volume II: 1600 to 2000*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. William Theodore de Bary et al. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 488.



Everywhere now, Confucian studies are followed, and every day the Buddhist teachings flourish more. "Humaneness" and "rightness" have become household words; even common soldiers and menials know what is meant by the *Classic of Odes*. In every family they read the sutras; porters and scullery maids can discuss Emptiness. The people's manner of living had benefited by great advances, but our National Learning is gradually falling into desuetude. Cultivated fields are continuously being abandoned, and possessions are being exhausted by contributions to Buddhism. Most lamentably, however, the teachings of our divine emperors are steadily melting away, each year more conspicuously than the last. Japanese learning is falling into ruin and is a bare tenth of what it once was.<sup>5</sup>

Azumamaro's student, Kamo no Mabuchi (1697-1769), was even more damning in his appraisal of the "Chinesified" status of the court at Edo, complaining that Japan was "infected with Chinese ideas."<sup>6</sup> He described how the indigenous ways of the Japanese became corrupted by the Confucians. He complained,

Just as roads are naturally created when people live in uncultivated woodlands or fields, so the Way of the Age of the Gods spontaneously took hold in Japan. Because it was a way indigenous to the country, it caused our emperors to become increasingly prosperous. However, not only had the Confucian teachings thrown China into disorder, but they now also had the same effect on Japan. Yet those not knowing these facts revere Confucianism and think that it is the Way to govern the country! This is a deplorable attitude.<sup>7</sup>

The notion that Confucianism had thrown China into disorder is quite ironic, given the Confucian emphasis on order, harmony, and the Mandate of Heaven. Much of the Confucians' claim to legitimacy rested on the idea that following the precepts of the Confucian way would lead to social stability. As Beasley notes, "The dynastic continuity of Japan and the relative turbulence of China thus became evidence of their respective moral standing."<sup>8</sup> In essence, Confucianism in Japan may have worked too well,

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 487.

<sup>6</sup> Kada no Mabuchi, "Inquiry into the Idea of the Nation (*Kokui Ko*)," in *Sources of Japanese Tradition, Volume II: 1600 to 2000*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. William Theodore de Bary et al. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 491.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Beasley, "The Edo Experience and Japanese Nationalism," 558.

demonstrating that the Confucians themselves were unable to live up to their purported ideals. These two early proponents of the *kokugaku* represent two primary reasons for the rise of “prenaationalism:” siphoning of the prosperity of the land by the Buddhist, who offered little in return, and the confusion that the Confucians had created in the Japanese government, just as they had in China.

A number of other factors also contributed to the rise of prenaationalism, including the fact that the Japanese archipelago had only recently been fully unified. It was not until the late sixteenth century that Oda Nobunaga (1534 – 1582) brought together all the various clans of Japan by means of sheer martial prowess. Until that time, the lands under the domain of the shogun were quite limited and much of the country, especially the island of Kyushu and the northern part of Honshu, was virtually autonomous. In 1556, Nobunaga’s successor, Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536-1598), began to lay the foundation for what would become a socially and politically unified Japan by outlawing Christianity (1587), initiating a survey of the total land of Japan (1588), and putting in place the four-tiered social structure that would become the basis for the Tokugawa government.<sup>9</sup>

It is from the decisive battle of Sekigahara in 1600 that historians date the birth of modern Japan. At this battle, Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543-1616) defeated the various *daimyo* who had conspired against him in the hopes of installing a different shogun to follow Hideyoshi, and took full control of the Japanese archipelago.<sup>10</sup> This unification was followed in short order by a number of social and cultural reforms, the most important being the movement of the capital from Kyoto to Edo (Tokyo), the solidification of

<sup>9</sup> These four tiers consisted of merchants, artisans, peasants, and samurai, in ascending order. For a more detailed discussion, see Hane, *Modern Japan: A Historical Survey*.

<sup>10</sup> This battle also serves as the reason why the date of the beginning of the Tokugawa era is often set at 1600, the date of the battle. However, since Ieyasu was not formally pronounced shogun until 1603, some scholars have dated the Tokugawa period as beginning thence. This essay follows the latter designation.

Hideyoshi's four-tiered social structure, and the closing of the country to the rest of the world, with limited exceptions, in 1639. This insularity of a newly unified Japan, with time to contemplate the notion of its own unique culture in the absence of a constant influx from China, Korea, and the West, produced many of the notions which led to the formation of the *kokugaku*. By the time that Motoori Norinaga (1730-1801), probably the most well-known writer of the National Learning school, made his appearance on the scene in the late eighteenth century, there appears to be what can be termed a "love of country." In his "First Steps into the Mountains (*Uiyamabumi*)," Norinaga wrote,

There are many types of foreign studies...but since they are foreign to us, they need not be discussed here. I prefer to expend my efforts on studies of my country, rather than waste it on matters pertaining to foreign countries. Leaving aside for the moment the question of which is superior, is it not regrettable that some people study foreign things and remain ignorant of the matters of their own country?<sup>11</sup>

For Norinaga, his love of Japan bordered on religion. He wrote that,

...because of the special dispensation of our imperial land, the ancient tradition of the Divine Age has been correctly and clearly transmitted in our country, telling us about the genesis of the great goddess and the reason for her adoration. The "special dispensation of our imperial land" means that ours is the native land of the Heaven-Shining Goddess who casts her light over all countries in the four seas. Thus, our country is the source and fountainhead of all other countries, and in all matters it excels all the others.<sup>12</sup>

Whereas Azumamaro and Mabuchi were somewhat pragmatic in their reasons for the promotion of *kokugaku*, citing Buddhist avarice and Confucian ineptitude, Norinaga gave an almost religious reason for learning of the Way of the Gods. In his readings of

<sup>11</sup> Motoori Nobunaga, "First Steps into the Mountains (*Uiyamabumi*)," in *Sources of Japanese Tradition, Volume II: 1600 to 2000*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. William Theodore de Bary et al. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 500.

<sup>12</sup> Motoori Nobunaga, "Precious Comb-box (*Tamakushige*)," in *Sources of Japanese Tradition, Volume II: 1600 to 2000*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. William Theodore de Bary et al. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 498.

the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki*, Norinaga had to somehow square the idea of Japan's being the "Land of the Gods" with the existence of other nations, a fact which was well-known to educated Japanese at the time. However, though these men knew about the existence of other nations, they knew very little about the nations themselves, their knowledge being limited to what leaked out from Nagasaki. Norinaga demonstrated how little was known of the international community when he wrote,

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In China and other countries, the "Heavenly Emperor is worshipped as the supreme divinity. Other countries have objects of reverence, each according to its own way, but their teachings are based on the logic of interference and some on arbitrary personal opinions....That foreign countries revere such nonexistent beings and remain unaware of the grace of the Sun Goddess is a matter of profound regret.<sup>13</sup>

The implication here being that since foreign countries worship false deities and follow false kings, it is Japan alone, with its unbroken line of imperial descent from the Sun herself, that is destined to lead the world.

This point is an important one to keep in mind in studying the Japanese nationalist discourse. While the justifications vary and often fluctuate between purely secular and entirely religious, the Japanese nationalist discourse is based upon some form of the sentiment expressed by Norinaga: *Japan, because of its uniqueness (i.e., cultural, geographic, or racial) deserves pride of place in world affairs*. As we go through the various manifestations of Japanese nationalism, we will see this idea put forth over and over again.

While members of the *kokugaku* movement were busy criticizing those scholars of "foreign" learning so pervasive in the society of their day, their criticisms were being supported by some of the very scholars they were trying to repudiate. Honda Toshiaki

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

(1744-1821) was one such thinker. A “mathematician, ship captain and scholar.”<sup>14</sup>

Honda was very much a nationalist who felt that strengthening the country could best be accomplished by learning from the West, specifically from the Dutch traders at Nagasaki. In 1798, he asked the most basic nationalist question: “How may Japan become the greatest nation in the world?”<sup>15</sup> The answer, according to Honda, was for Japan to cease to persist “in her bad habit of imitating old Chinese usages”<sup>16</sup> and to look to the superior technology and science of the Western nations in order to ensure the greatness of the country. Most Japanese of this time period, including those in power, had an exceptionally limited view of the West, and tended, with the cultural chauvinism so prevalent in Confucian societies, to assume that its countries were inherently inferior to Japan. Such led Honda to lament that Japanese “officials are misled by foolish tales about these great countries, which are actually far superior to Japan, and consequently do not take advantage of great opportunities for profitable ventures.”<sup>17</sup>

There are two important observations to make here. The first is the nature of Japanese isolation from 1639 to 1854. Although the policy restricted contact and trade with foreign powers, it by no means ended all intercourse with the outside world. Dutch traders were allowed to continue to trade and live in Nagasaki, though they were watched closely and had to observe a number of conditions, and trade with China, Korea, and the peoples of Taiwan continued. Well-connected persons were quite aware of developments around the world, especially the problems China and the nations of Southeast Asia were

<sup>14</sup> “Honda Toshiaki: Ambitions for Japan,” in *Sources of Japanese Tradition, Volume II: 1600 to 2000*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. William Theodore de Bary et al. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 594.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 596.

<sup>16</sup> Honda Toshiaki, “A Secret Plan of Government (*Keisei Hisaku*),” in *Sources of Japanese Tradition, Volume II: 1600 to 2000*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. William Theodore de Bary et al. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 600.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

facing in dealing with the Western nations. Added to this was the *rongaku*, or Dutch Learning, which gained increasing popularity among educated Japanese, primarily for the efficacy of the medical knowledge contained in Western books. All of this led many Japanese thinkers to ponder their country's place in international affairs during this time of seclusion.

The other observation of importance is the apparent maturity of the nationalist sentiments displayed by Honda. Writing at the end of the eighteenth century and beginning of the nineteenth, the nationalism of Honda had almost a generation from Motoori Norinaga, and nearly three generations from Azumamaro's "Petition," to mature. Honda displayed in his writings, more than five decades before the arrival of Commodore Perry, the realization that, if Japan were to become a great nation, it must understand and imitate those achievements which had made the most powerful civilizations at the time, the Western civilizations, superior; namely, science and technology. Of course, at this time, the nationalist discourse had not yet attained the validity it would acquire by the end of the Meiji era. Rather, it was still only one form of discourse among many, and not a very popular one at that, as both Buddhism and Neo-Confucianism continued to dominate the intellectual world of the Edo period. It would not be until the Japanese victories at the turn of the twentieth century that the nationalists would win widespread acceptance. Unfortunately, this left the nationalists' warnings unheeded at the time.

Sato Nobuhiro (1769-1850) was not as enamored with the technological and scientific prowess of the Western nations as was Honda, but he did think that Japan was destined to take the mantle of world leadership. To do so, Japan need not adopt the ideas and practices of the Western nations, which had no knowledge of the ancient way, but

only to restructure and centralize the national polity. Sato's nationalism, which was echoed by many of the leaders of the Meiji Restoration, harkened back to that of Norinaga. He asserted that,

[Japan's] people, living on sacred land, are superior, excelling those of other countries for bravery and resoluteness. In truth they are fully capable of holding the reins of the world. From this position of strength they can majestically command the world in every direction, and by virtue of the awesome prestige of this imperial land they can readily subjugate the puny barbarians and unify the world under their control.<sup>18</sup>

Lest anyone have mistaken Sato's words as pure allegorical romanticism, he quite plainly stated that, "Heaven ordained our country to command all nations."<sup>19</sup>

By this time, the nationalist discourse in Japan had matured to a point where it was becoming an increasingly influential form of social commentary, and had begun to viably compete with both Buddhism and Confucianism in discussions among the educated elite. The Tokugawa *bakufu* at the time was a degenerate organization that was barely able either to control the increasingly independent *daimyo* or to fix many of the social problems facing Japan. Nationalism provided many of the *bakufu*'s critics cover from which to criticize the government and its policies.

The first half of the nineteenth century saw two concurrent events that led to the greater legitimacy of the nationalist discourse in Japan: the degeneration of the Tokugawa Shogunate and the arrival of the Western powers. The *bakufu* had been in a steady state of decline since the death of the third shogun, Tokugawa Iemitsu (1604-1651), with a brief reflowering under the eighth shogun, Tokugawa Yoshimune, from 1714 to 1751.

<sup>18</sup> Sato Nobuhiro, "Confidential Plan of World Unification (*Kondo Hisaku*)," in *Sources of Japanese Tradition, Volume II: 1600 to 2000*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. William Theodore de Bary et al. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 614.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

Directly criticizing the *bakufu*, however, could still mean death to the intellectual who dared to do so openly, forcing many early participants in the nationalist discourse to direct their attacks toward those surrounding the shogun, rather than toward the ruler himself. Mabuchi's attack on the Confucians, for instance, indicated that it was not the ruler who was at fault, but the Confucian advisors and teachers whom he employed due to a mistaken view of China's civilizational prowess.

The Westerners, too, had been a long time coming. Up to the mid-nineteenth century, Western countries had been largely content with their gains in India, China, and the South Pacific, seeing no reason to pry open the apparently insignificant archipelago of Japan. This was, no doubt, reinforced by the formidable navy of the Dutch, who were all too keen to maintain their profitable enterprises at Nagasaki. This changed rather quickly, and in an odd sort of way. In 1839, the Opium Wars began between Britain and China, resulting in the defeat and carving up of the latter into spheres of influence, and opening up a number of new avenues for trade, which, until then, had been regulated by the Manchus in their favor to preserve the social status quo. As China became saturated with new traders, Japan began to feel the effects. The so-called "Black Ships" began to appear off Japanese coasts with increasing frequency, many of which came from the United States of America. Hane elaborates,

[The US] was becoming a significant Pacific power and consequently sought to develop commercial relations with Asian nations. In addition, the United States had whaling ships roaming the north Pacific that needed supply bases and shelter. Moreover it was felt that arrangements had to be negotiated for the protection and care of American seamen shipwrecked on Japanese shores, who were heretofore treated as unlawful intruders by the authorities.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Mikiso Hane, *Modern Japan: A Historical Survey*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Boulder: Westview Press, 2001), 71.



The United States sent three expeditions to Japan in an attempt to secure trading rights and safe passage for its commercial whaling fleet. The first two, in 1837 and 1846, both failed to achieve their objectives. On July 8, 1853, however, Commodore Matthew Perry (1796-1858) docked in Edo bay to make his case for opening the country, then left, promising to return in one year for an answer to his petition. As a way of ensuring compliance, he stated that he would return with more ships, just in case the shogun decided against the American's request.

The technological sophistication of the Western powers that made trade and travel easier was one reason why Japan's "closed country" policy was unsustainable; but, that the attempted opening came when it did was an act of sheer providence. The mid-1800s were a rough time for the *bakufu*, as it began to lose control of many of the more powerful *daimyo* at the same time that the populace was becoming increasingly urbanized. The government at Edo was able to do very little to help assuage the ills of urbanization, leading to increased discontent among the masses. Western learning had begun to gain greater prominence at this time because it "gradually proved effective in criticizing the existing order for its inability to deal satisfactorily with the crises confronting Japan."<sup>21</sup> That the *bakufu* was unable to deny Commodore Perry's requests served as further proof to many that the time for change was ripe. As Aizawa Seishisai (1782-1863) complained, "The land amid the seas that the Western barbarians call America occupies the hindmost region of the earth; thus its people are all stupid and

<sup>21</sup> Hirakawa Sukehiro, "Japan's Turn to the West," in *Modern Japanese Thought*, ed. Bob Tadashi Wakabayashi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 58.

simple and incapable of doing things.”<sup>22</sup> That such a place could force the hands of the shogun demonstrated just how inept the *bakufu* truly was.

Around this time, the nationalist discourse split into two schools which would come back together after the Meiji Restoration in 1868; these schools could be termed the *sonno-joi* (“revere the emperor, expel the barbarian”) and *bunmei kaika* (“civilization and enlightenment”) schools. These two schools shared the nationalist goal: both envisioned a strong, independent and powerful Japan with the emperor at its head, differing only in how to go about initiating such change.

The *sonno-joi* school presented a number of approaches for elevating Japan to a prominent place in world affairs. Some members, such as Aizawa, seemed to share the sentiments of Azumamaro. Aizawa believed that the problem was not one of technological or scientific advancement, but that the true “Way of the Gods” had been obscured, first by Buddhists, then by Confucians, and now by Westerners. For Aizawa, and those who shared his views, the solution was to stop looking to other countries for guidance and to follow the Ways set down by the Japanese ancestors. Aizawa wrote that

...our ancestral teaching has been muddled by the shamans, altered by the Buddhists, and obscured by pseudo-Confucians and second-rate scholars who have, through their sophistries, confused the minds of men....now we must cope with the foreigners of the West where every country upholds the law of Jesus and attempts therewith to subdue other countries.<sup>23</sup>

Other members of the *sonno-joi* school were slightly less xenophobic in their understanding of the Western nations. While they shared Aizawa’s desire for Japan to take the helm of the new world order and a general distrust of foreigners, they recognized

<sup>22</sup> Aizawa Seishisai, “New Theses” (*Shinron*), in *Sources of Japanese Tradition, Volume II: 1600 to 2000*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. William Theodore de Bary et al. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 621.

<sup>23</sup> Aizawa Seishisai, “The Danger from the West,” in *Sources of Japanese Tradition, Volume II: 1600 to 2000*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. William Theodore de Bary et al. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 625.

that simply returning to the ancient Way of the Gods was in no way going to stop the superior militaries of the West from taking advantage of agrarian Japan. These thinkers advocated selective borrowing from the Western powers, while retaining an inner core of “Japaneseness.” We may here dub this school the pragmatic *sonno joi* school. The main proponent of this line of thought was Sakuma Shozan (1811-1864), a Confucian scholar of the late Tokugawa era. Shozan believed that the Western countries had access to knowledge not available to the ancient Confucian sages. He spoke of the “vistas of science” which could be used to compliment the ethical teachings of the sages. In order for the country to become powerful, the leaders had to employ “the ethics of the East and the scientific techniques of the West, neglecting neither the spiritual nor the material aspects of life, combining subjective and objective and thus bringing benefit to the people and serving the nation.”<sup>24</sup>

It is important to point out that it is in Shozan’s writings that the association of national security with the nationalist discourse began. He wrote of the need to restructure the military into a more cohesive and formidable unit along the lines of the Western powers.

I have wished to follow in substance the Western principles of armament and, by banding together loyal, valorous, strong men of old, established families not in the military class...to form a voluntary group that would be made to have as its sole aim that of guarding the nation and protecting the people.<sup>25</sup>

Here, the nationalist discourse has graduated from prenationalism to modern nationalism. Nationalists are often overly interested in the existential matters of states, and for good

<sup>24</sup> Sakuma Shozan, “Reflections on My Errors (*Seiken-Roku*),” in *Sources of Japanese Tradition, Volume II: 1600 to 2000*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. William Theodore de Bary et al. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 634.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

reason, as the distinguishing mark of a nation-state is viable, sovereign control over a given piece of land and all the inhabitants therein. If the government in question cannot exercise viable control over its territory, then it cannot truly be said to be a nation.<sup>26</sup>

Hence, issues of national security are often the primary, though not the only, concern of nationalists. This emphasis on military prowess is echoed by a contemporary of Shozan, and a member of the same school of thought, Yokoi Shonan (1809-1869), who summed up the nationalist sentiments quite nicely:

...in accordance with divine virtue and sage teachings, we must observe today the conditions in all countries, greatly develop the system of our government in promoting the welfare of the people by innovating an enlightened rule, and earnestly make our country strong economically and militarily in order to avoid indignities from other countries.<sup>27</sup>

The other contemporary school of nationalist thinking, the *bunmei kaika*, was led primarily by the scholar Fukuzawa Yukichi (1835-1901), and was part of a larger social movement in Japan, often called the “Japanese Enlightenment.” This movement lasted from about the mid-1860s until the rise of “Meiji Conservatism” in the early 1880s and was premised largely on the ideas of Euro-American Liberalism. This movement was driven primarily by the success of Fukuzawa’s writings, which included *Seiyo jijo* (Conditions in the West) and *Bunmeiron no gairyaku* (An outline of a theory of civilization). What is particularly interesting about this movement, in contrast to its apparently novel social views, was its lack of originality in substance. Carmen Blacker explains the premises of this movement by stating:

<sup>26</sup> Hence, the often-misused term, “failed state.”

<sup>27</sup> Yokoi Shonan, “Three Theses on State Policy (*Kokuze Sanron*),” in *Sources of Japanese Tradition, Volume II: 1600 to 2000*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. William Theodore de Bary et al. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 645.

It was impossible to understand Western science while remaining rooted in the beliefs of eastern ethics, for the reason that eastern ethics had produced a certain “spirit” or mental attitude to the universe, nature, and something which was impossible to reconcile with the assumptions of Western science.<sup>28</sup>

Norinaga and Aizawa echoed through these words: Japan had not fully adopted the Western ways because it had been corrupted by Chinese teachings into thinking that the Western ways were inferior. Blacker continues:

—It was purely because they [the Japanese leadership] had been misled by the teachings of the Sages that their faculties of independent reasoning had been atrophied through disuse that they had failed to recognize the perennial values inherent in the Western civilizations. The blame for the Japanese standing for the moment on a rung considerably lower than the West lay therefore at the door of China.<sup>29</sup>

Fukuzawa’s ideas, as explained by Blacker, implied that, had Japan not been corrupted early on in its history by Chinese scholarship, it already would have been on par with the Western powers by the mid-nineteenth century.

In adopting the assumptions of Euro-American Liberalism, Fukuzawa put forth a number of ideas antithetical to the Japanese culture of his time: he advocated women’s rights, individual political rights, and increased contact with the rest of the world. However, while his adopted ideals seemed enlightened, his underlying premise was that of the nationalist discourse. In *An Outline of a Theory of Civilization*, Fukuzawa presented an interesting argument about the evolutionary nature of civilizations. He wrote:

...although we call the nations of the West civilized, they can correctly be honored with this designation only in modern history. And many of them, if we were to be more precise, would fall well short of this designation....we cannot be

<sup>28</sup> Carmen Blacker, *The Japanese Enlightenment: A Study of the Writings of Fukuzawa Yukichi* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1964), 28.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 36.

satisfied with the level of civilization attained by the West. But shall we therefore conclude that Japan should reject it? If we did, what other criterion would we have?<sup>30</sup>

There are a number of important assumptions here. The first is that civilization is an evolutionary process that goes on indefinitely, and that no one country can be said to be the final product of this evolution. Second, the Western nations, the exemplars of civilization at the time, were not the best, but the best existing examples which Japan could emulate in its rise to international dominance. Thus, Japan's leaders were to follow the Western model, infusing it with the indigenous ideas uncorrupted by the Confucian teachings, until such a point where the Japanese nation surpassed all others and became the civilization *par excellence*. The end goal of Fukuzawa's ideology, then, was a strong, prosperous, and dominant Japan, an inevitable product of the evolution of civilization.

### **The Meiji Era and the Ascendancy of the Nationalist Discourse**

These two schools of thought, the *sonno joi* and *bunmei kaika*, were fairly short-lived, primarily because they addressed specific issues of specific time periods and were not able to work as a guide through the rapid and turbulent changes of the Meiji era (1868-1911). The country, officially opened to the world in 1854, soon experienced domestic upheaval which resulted in the enthronement of the Emperor Meiji as the sovereign of the nation in 1868. This was followed by a flurry of reforms and a deconstruction of the old social order in an attempt to build a new one.

<sup>30</sup> Fukuzawa Yukichi, "An Outline of A Theory of Civilization," in *Sources of Japanese Tradition, Volume II: 1600 to 2000*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. William Theodore de Bary et al. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 701.

This rapid socio-political change resulted in a new school of thought, one which synthesized the major parts of the two schools preceding it. Kenneth Pyle dubs this school “Meiji Conservatism.”<sup>31</sup> This school borrowed selectively from the West, while retaining the essence of the indigenous culture. Kawakami Hajime (1879-1946) explained that “[the Japanese] have the history of England’s failure and there is no need to repeat that history....The history of the failures of the advanced countries is the best textbook example for the follower countries.”<sup>32</sup> In other words, the Meiji Conservatives thought that they could sidestep the problems of industrialization by utilizing the example of the Western countries.

Largely a top-down phenomenon, put in place by the leaders of the restoration in an attempt to build a strong, united Japan, Meiji Conservatism borrowed from its two intellectual predecessors heavily. It initiated government reform based on an (purportedly traditional) indigenous model, the emperor system, stripping away much of the Confucianism of the Tokugawa, and emphasizing military and economic prowess. In doing so, the Meiji leaders did not shy away from borrowing ideas from Western nations, though they did so generally at arms length. Such borrowing was “purely instrumental” and “a necessary expedient,”<sup>33</sup> and was done in such a way as to pick and choose the social and political systems of whatever country were most suitable for the Japanese nation. As Pyle explains:

The advanced countries became not only models of economic and political techniques up for adoption, they also provided examples of mistakes made,

<sup>31</sup> Kenneth B. Pyle, “Meiji Conservatism,” in *Modern Japanese Thought*, ed. Bob Todashi Wakabayashi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 98-146.

<sup>32</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, 134-135.

<sup>33</sup> Charles D. Sheldon, “Some Traditional Factors Affecting Japanese Politics and Foreign Relations in Two Periods of Crisis: 1853-68 and 1931-41,” in *Tradition and Modern Japan*, ed. P.G. O’Neill (Kent: Paul Norbury Publications, 1981), 107.

warnings of problems which the first industrializers had encountered and which follower societies should seek to avoid or mitigate.<sup>34</sup>

Although this selective borrowing may have aided the Meiji leaders in rapidly modernizing their country, it did not come cheaply. Because Japan was a largely agrarian society with no formidable armed forces or merchant marine fleet, the peasants carried the burden of its success. Many explanations have been put forth to explain why the peasants were so willing to undergo such hardships in the name of the nation. Some posit the phenomenon of State Shinto as an explanation. Given that State Shinto lacked both a viable structure and a unifying ideology, as well as the fact that it was initially met with skepticism by the general public, this excuse falls exceptionally short of explanatory power. Still others advance the idea of the emperor system as “the ideological glue that held together the new political structure.”<sup>35</sup> There is some truth to the assertion that the emperor came to play a dominant role in the minds of the Japanese. In her interviews with Japanese prisoners of war (POWs) during World War II, for instance, Ruth Benedict discovered that “the Emperor was to them [the POW]...inseparable from Japan. ‘A Japan without the Emperor is not Japan.’”<sup>36</sup> We must be careful, however, not to mistake cause for effect. While it is true that the people of the Meiji era espoused a love of the emperor and that a cult circling around him eventually grew to centrality, that does not explain why the people were initially so willing to bear the burdens of modernization, especially since they had yet to be bombarded with years of propaganda extolling the emperor as a divine ruler. As Sheldon Garon notes:

<sup>34</sup> Kenneth B. Pyle, “Advantages of Followership: German Economics and Japanese Bureaucrats, 1890–1925,” *Journal of Japanese Studies* 1, no. 1 (Autumn 1974): 127.

<sup>35</sup> Pyle, “Meiji Conservatism,” 125.

<sup>36</sup> Benedict, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, 32.



We must be wary...of invoking the emperor system as an all-encompassing explanation of modern Japanese history before 1945. Contemporary officials did not speak of the “emperor system” in their defense of the established order. The term itself was introduced by the Communist International in 1932, and only after World War II did Japanese intellectuals widely apply the construct in an effort to explain why the people had not resisted the tragic growth of authoritarianism and militarism.<sup>37</sup>

While the emperor system did eventually rise to prominence and was enthusiastically embraced by much of the population, it does not explain why the peasants, who had long been primarily loyal to their *daimyo*, suddenly embraced the ideas put forth in the nationalist discourse.

A better explanation, which is of certain import for our current study, may be much more prosaic in nature. First, the people may have been so willing to accept the burden of modernization because, initially, life in Japan changed very little from the Tokugawa to the Meiji eras. Hane elaborates,

...the struggle that resulted in the downfall of the Bakufu was an old-fashioned power struggle between traditional feudal power blocs. Specifically, it was a struggle between the Bakufu and, primarily, Choshu and Satsuma. The failure of the former and the success of the latter was not directly related to the rise of the peasantry, the emergence of the merchant class, and the growth of commercial capitalism. The Meiji was certainly not a bourgeois revolution. Furthermore, peasant uprisings were not politically motivated or even directly involved in the actual overthrow of the Tokugawa government.<sup>38</sup>

In essence, the Meiji Restoration was less of a revolution and more of a political event, wherein the old elite maintained the reins of power, though the person at the top of the hierarchy changed from the shogun to, ostensibly, the emperor. For the common people, even less had changed initially, as they were still saddled with burdensome taxes

<sup>37</sup> Sheldon Garon, *Molding Japanese Minds: The State in Everyday Life* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 62.

<sup>38</sup> Hane, *Modern Japan: A Historical Survey*, 87.

and short, often bleak lives. Hence, the peasantry did not initially embrace modernization with open arms, but continued along the path it had been going, though it was now promised a better life under the new government. Beginning in 1868, the Meiji government began an ambitious series of reforms, the aim of which was to strengthen the country to be on par with Western powers. As Bennedict observed, "They [the Meiji leaders] did not take their task to be an ideological revolution at all. They treated it as a job. Their goal as they conceived it was to make Japan into a country which must be reckoned with."<sup>39</sup> Rather than assuming that the people simply bought the radically new nationalist rhetoric unquestionably, it makes more sense to look at the early Meiji as a time of continuity punctured by measured change. The leadership, with the mistakes of the West in mind, used this transition well, working tirelessly to advance the Japanese civilization.

Proof of this advancement was not long in coming, as, in less than a generation after the restoration, the Japanese managed to defeat the Chinese in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895, a victory which carried with it a myriad of meaning. Not only had Japan proved its military-industrial prowess, but also, in so doing, the Japanese had defeated the country at the traditional center of Asian civilization, the Middle Kingdom itself. This victory was followed shortly by another in the Russo-Japan War of 1904-1905. Whereas the previous war had proven the viability of Japanese development, the latter war made Japan a world power in its own right. As Motosada Zumoto (1862-1943), in discussing Japan's victory over Russia, noted:

No historical event ever produced such a stir and commotion throughout the length and breadth of whole Asia as the news of Japanese achievements on the battle-fields of Manchuria in 1904-5. The surrender of Port Arthur and

<sup>39</sup> Bennedict, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, 79.

Kuropatkin's crushing defeat at Mukden, followed by the annihilation of Rodjestvensky's fleet in the Sea of Japan, not only put a stop to Russian expansion in Eastern Asia, but ushered in a new era in the history of the relationship between East and West.<sup>40</sup>

The rhetoric of the Meiji leaders in promoting the virtues of Japan and the emperor system had proven successful, despite the fact that life for the common Japanese had changed very little since the Tokugawa era, remaining one of constant, backbreaking work and poverty.

Japan's military successes not only validated the nationalist claims, but also initiated the growth of ultra-nationalism, which would give rise to fascism. Up to now, the nationalist discourse had been largely an elite phenomenon, first practiced by scholars such as Azumamaro, Norinaga, and Shozan, then put into practice by the Meiji leaders. With the two victories demonstrating the apparent validity of the nationalist rhetoric, the nationalist discourse moved to being a widespread phenomenon among the people. As Wilson observes,

In the years between 1894 and 1945, discourses emphasizing the importance of nations undoubtedly appealed to a wider variety of people and groups....The discourse of national interests formed a unifying thread which ran through right and left wing and everything in between.<sup>41</sup>

There are three points which must be emphasized here because of their importance to our overall discussion. The first, as mentioned above, is that the Japanese victories over China and Russia led to the popular dispensation of nationalist ideology among the populace. This was probably due primarily to the simple fact that the military victories gave the common Japanese people a sense of pride and purpose. They were no

<sup>40</sup> Motosada Zumoto, "Japan and the Pan-Asiatic Movement," *News Bulletin, Institute of Pacific Relations*, (February 1927): 10-11.

<sup>41</sup> Wilson, "Rethinking Nation and Nationalism in Japan," 13.

longer suffering long hours in the field with meager rations just so that the *daimyo* could maintain their extravagant lifestyle and the samurai could become increasingly sedentary; rather, their labor and hardship was now serving the greater purpose of an independent and powerful Japan. This is not to say that the propaganda of the Meiji leadership did not play a role in the widespread acceptance of the nationalist discourse. As mentioned above, the Meiji Restoration was mostly a top-down phenomenon, and the leadership put a great deal of effort into manipulating the social and political order. However, the propaganda alone would be unable to explain the extreme popularity of the nationalist discourse had it lacked validation. The military victories at the turn of the century validated the nationalist rhetoric, reinforcing the efficacy of the nationalist ideas among the people.

The second point is that, from here on, the nationalist discourse became inextricably caught up in issues of national security. This was due partially to the fact that, at this point in history, military prowess was the primary means by which a nation demonstrated its status as world power. More importantly, however, it was because the victories of the imperial forces helped underscore the validity of the nationalist claims. Stated simply, the best methods are those that work, and the Meiji leaders had a single-minded desire to realize the nationalist dream of a strong, rich, independent Japan, and proved their mettle in 1895.

Finally, the nationalist discourse became the primary method of discussion in Japanese socio-political culture, a fact that carried with it two consequences. First, it sets the stage for the growth of fascism, as the people accepted only that which advocated

a strong Japan as legitimate. Ideals that emphasized a more universal bent, such as socialism, with its calls for united worker parties regardless of state or nation, were swept away as illegitimate.

The second consequence was much more complicated, but may partially explain the lack of popularity for many of the other socio-political discourses in Japan. During the Taisho era (1912-1926), a number of alternative ideologies were put forth, including, democracy, Marxism, anarchism, and socialism. All of these ideologies had their representatives and met with some measure of success, but were never able to garner in Japan the support that was found in many other parts of the world, including in China and Southeast Asia. There were a number of reasons why these ideologies failed in Japan, including a rigid social structure that worked against them, a brutal crackdown on their advocates by the police, and the fact that the elder statesmen had learned how to deal with such deviant movements by watching the same movements in other countries. As Peter Duus explains, “Intellectually the *sakoku* policy remained intact. The Meiji leaders encouraged the growth of a narrow and provincial chauvinism.”<sup>42</sup> This allowed the government to enact policies that would stave off many of the problems that had given rise to deviant social movements in other countries. However, a large part of the credit should go to the nationalists as well, not only because they were good propagandists, but also because they were able to produce results; both social reform at home and the gain of prestige abroad made alternative social schemes advocated by Marxists, anarchists, and the like simply unnecessary. Duus and Scheiner sum it up

<sup>42</sup> Peter Duus, “Yoshino Sakuzo: The Christian as Political Critic,” *Journal of Japanese Studies* 4, no. 2 (Summer 1978): 316.

nicely by stating that “the socialists were clearly at odds with their society.”<sup>43</sup> The same could be said of the members of most other social movements at the time.

During the Taisho era, there was one social problem of exceptional interest for our purposes here. Charles Sheldon explains that,

In the 1920s and 1930s, conflicts of interest were...becoming increasingly apparent, and there was a widening economic gap between the modernized and traditional industries and, in values and outlook, between the modernizing cities and the traditional countryside. There was a widespread feeling that there was something wrong with society.<sup>44</sup>

One problem that the Meiji leaders had not anticipated was the uneven development of the cities versus the countryside. The conflict between traditional and modern society had long passed its critical phase in the West by the time the Meiji observers went to visit, beginning with the Iwakura mission in 1871. As a result, the scapegoat for these problems eventually became the Western ideas themselves. “In the end, the conflict was expressed in a struggle between culture – or the nation’s distinctive spirit – and modern civilization – especially as expressed as functional political structure – and desperate efforts to overcome this polarization.”<sup>45</sup> In other words, in attempting to square Eastern ethics with Western technology, the leadership had somehow overlooked the Eastern part. As a solution to this dilemma, “the new culturalism of the 1930s proposed that Japan was appointed to lead the world to a higher level of cultural synthesis that surpassed Western nations.”<sup>46</sup> Again, echoes of Fukuzawa’s *An Outline of a Theory of Civilization* ring forth. He theorized in that treatise that Western civilizations were not

<sup>43</sup> Peter Duus and Irwin Scheiner, “Socialism, Liberalism and Marxism,” in *Modern Japanese Thought*, ed. Bob Tadashi Wakabayashi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 152.

<sup>44</sup> Charles Sheldon, “Some Traditional Factors Affecting Japanese Politics and Foreign Relations in Two Periods of Crisis: 1853-68 and 1931-41,” 108-109.

<sup>45</sup> Tetsuo Najita and H.D. Hartootunian, “Japan’s Revolt Against the West,” in *Modern Japanese Thought*, ed. Bob Tadashi Wakabayashi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 209.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 208.

the best possible models, but the best achieved so far, with the implicit assumption that one day Japan would reach a level where it would surpass these other nations in international prestige. For the thinkers of the 1930s, the conflict between the traditional and modern areas of society, combined with the general social malaise of the era, served as an impetus for renewed cultural awareness and a surge of nationalist pride. It was at this point that ultra-nationalism made its appearance in the realm of the nationalist discourse. Were the nationalists not able to legitimize their claims, or were their claims not so well received by the masses, such an evolution of thought might not have been a possibility. As it was, however, this ultra-nationalism was the driving force behind Japan's initiation of the Pacific War, and the ensuing defeat of the nation. It is to this pivotal era that we now turn our attention.

### **The Pacific War**

The late 1920s and early 1930s were a time of social upheaval in Japan. The uneven development brought about by modernization, combined with the increasingly corrupt polity, led many to call for a national reorganization and a greater emphasis on the problems of the homeland, ultimately resulting in the ascendancy of the militarists to the upper ranks of government. In order to fully understand how this could come about, we must first examine the events that led to the initiation of the Pacific War.

The Manchurian Incident of September 1931 was the spark that ignited the war in Asia. Shunsuke Tsurumi is quite blunt in his appraisal of the incident:

The Manchurian Incident was launched by some staff officers of the expeditionary forces in China, and the Government backed this unexpected move on the part of the troops it had dispatched. This resulted in the establishment of Manchukuo and continuing warfare with China. It was because of their inability

to bring this war to a close that the Japanese were drawn into the quagmire of the Pacific War.<sup>47</sup>

The Manchurian Incident was an odd affair in the history of Japanese politics, and one that greatly impeded Japan's ambitions for world primacy. By the time of the incident, the Japanese Empire was fairly expansive and included colonies in Korea, Taiwan, and Southeast Asia. The Manchurian Incident was not an attempt by the home government to expand colonial control into northern China under the puppet state of Manchukuo, though this was the ultimate result. Rather, this incident was one initiated and carried out by radical nationalists in the Kwangtung army and then, only after the fact, supported by the home government. Once news of the incident reached the home islands, it met with such strong support that the government had no choice but to support it. Hane elaborates,

...these conspirators and assassins [the military radicals] did put Japan on the road to war by virtue of the enthusiastic support they gathered to their causes from the general public and from political circles. Japan won one "glorious victory" after another on the continent after the Manchurian incident and, in response, the public gave the military adventurers unrestrained support....The press, in fact, greeted [Prime Minister Shidehara's] efforts to settle the Manchurian affair peacefully with charges of treason.<sup>48</sup>

It is not hard to see why the populace would so embrace the act that led the country to war and, ultimately, to defeat. It was not just that the inter-war years were a time of instability, which the "victory" in Manchuria helped to assuage; rather, this widespread applauding of the event demonstrates the power of the nationalists in Japan's ascension to modernity. As pointed out above, the people were willing to undergo excessive hardships during the Meiji era due partially to the efficacy of the nationalist

<sup>47</sup> Shunsuke Tsurumi, *An Intellectual History of Wartime Japan: 1931-1945* (New York: KPI, 1986), 30.

<sup>48</sup> Hane, *Modern Japan: A Historical Survey*, 262.



ideas. Here, more than a generation on, we see the same phenomenon: while domestic politicians were wringing their hands, attempting to deal with the changes of the times, the military was bringing home victories. The militarists, who had by now taken over much of the nationalist discourse, were able to produce results that propelled them to the higher ranks of government. Hane notes that, “the expansionist policies of the military were based on the belief that Japan’s economic difficulties could be resolved by moving into Manchuria and other parts of China where supposedly unlimited reservoirs of wealth could be tapped.”<sup>49</sup> Hane observes that, although the economy improved somewhat, this was not owed exclusively to expansionist policies. The key point here is that the people were apparently convinced of the efficacy of the militarists’ policies, as indicated by the broad popular support received by these men.

That the Japanese public would so enthusiastically embrace the aggressiveness of the Japanese army runs counter to much of the accepted scholarship in this area, which tends to look upon the militarists as manipulating a passive and uninformed populace.

Garon is worth quoting at some length on this matter:

Most historical accounts of twentieth-century Japan posit a sharp divide between society and a powerful bureaucratic state. Sometimes the people appear to resist the regime; more often they acquiesce, but rarely are they depicted as cooperating actively with the state. This portrait of state-society relations has led historians on both sides of the Pacific to divide – not totally convincingly – the first half of the twentieth century into two distinct periods. The 1910s and 1920s are generally seen as a time of conflict between a conservative state and a progressive, urbanizing civil society that includes labor unions, feminist organizations, liberal intellectuals, modernist writers, and Marxist social scientists. The years between 1932 and 1945, by contrast, are described as a period when military and bureaucratic elites clamped down on this once-flourishing civil-society and mobilized an obedient, passive population behind authoritarianism and war.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 263.

<sup>50</sup> Garon, *Molding Japanese Minds*, 17.

Garon discusses “grass-roots fascism,” which encompassed the “often enthusiastic participation of ordinary people in the authoritarian mobilization drives of World War II.”<sup>51</sup>

The ascendancy of the militarists was not, as is often depicted, the machinations of a few manipulative elites upon a poor, peace-loving society. The reality of the situation was that the general populace of Japan shared many of the goals of the militarists and, by celebrating the victories of the armed forces, shared the responsibility for the actions that followed. This may largely be due to the fact that, as pointed out above, the nationalist discourse, at this point imbued with militarist ideas, had become the primary form of political discourse in prewar Japan. There is much continuity present here that is easily lost amid the rapid modernization of Japanese society, but it would certainly be a shame to mistake form for substance. Although the Japanese economy grew and the social situation changed, the underlying goal, that of building a strong, independent Japan, never changed. The nationalists had, with single-minded determination, set about to achieve the goal of making Japan into a world power. As we have seen, it was primarily the efficacy of their policies, rather than their powers of manipulation, that garnered such support among the people. Events quickly spiraled out of control, however, resulting in the ascension of a fascist state in Japan and the tragedy of the Pacific War.

The Japanese nationalist discourse, though changing its form, remained a strong factor in Japanese socio-political culture. The problem of defeat, addressed in the next chapter, transformed the discourse, but never eliminated nor questioned its goals. Rather, the goals that have undergirded the nationalist cause have remained the same from before

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 18.

the Meiji Restoration to the present day. Before we can see the current manifestation of the discourse, we must grapple with the problem of defeat and the Occupation that followed.

## CHAPTER4

### POSTWAR SECURITY AND THE US-JAPAN ALLIANCE

This chapter deals with change; not radical change which is often presumed of postwar Japan, but a shift of character brought on by the dramatic and total defeat of Japan in the Pacific War. This defeat did not result in a complete restructuring of the Japanese socio-political order, nor did it discredit the nationalist discourse; rather, the end of the war brought about a period of introspection and reevaluation, resulting in a redirection of the nationalist discourse as well as a new way of viewing the nation and its security, a view which persists until this day.

Social and cultural change resulting in the alteration of state behavior is best addressed, analytically, by the culturalist model. As discussed in chapter 2, both neo-realism and neo-liberalism presuppose stasis and are not well disposed to deal with the subject of change. The culturalist model, by contrast, is predicated upon the study of state identity which, like a person's identity, is subject to change over time. As Katzenstein notes, "History is a process of change that leaves an impact on state identity."<sup>1</sup> This "process of change" need not be a radical one; indeed, change, in any form, is quite often slow and measured, especially when the change is occurring in such a large body as the Japanese population. Furthermore, such change rarely occurs in the socio-political structure itself. Instead, change in large bodies of people is often that of form rather than substance. Thomas U. Berger points out that, "Simple, instrumental beliefs can be easily discarded. More abstract or emotionally laden beliefs and values

<sup>1</sup> Katzenstein, Introduction to *The Culture of National Security*, 23.

that make up the core of a culture are more resistant to change.”<sup>2</sup> In the case of Japan, it was the ideas of the militarists and imperialists that were discarded, while the core nationalist sentiment -that Japan, due to its unique history and geography, deserved a central place in the world order - had not changed. This introspective transformation began with defeat.

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## Defeat

On November 28, 1945, Prime Minister Shidehara Kijuro (1872-1951) gave an address to the Diet, wherein he informed those present that,

...the War Inquiry Commission has been set up in the cabinet because it is believed necessary to probe the cause and the actual conditions *that brought on defeat* in order that egregious errors may not be repeated in the future (emphasis added).<sup>3</sup>

Questions about the defeat itself were prominently on the minds of the postwar Japanese, and for a number of very good reasons. For one, most of the population had been under the assumption that the Imperial forces were some of the best in the world. This belief had its roots in Japanese victories in 1895, 1905, and in the various Chinese campaigns which began with the Manchurian Incident in 1931. Furthermore, all the news of the Pacific War was filtered by the Imperial government. Hane explains:

Immediately after the outbreak of the war in the Pacific, the government, headed by Prime Minister Tojo, enacted an emergency law to control speech, publication, assembly and association. No war news could be released without the approval of the supreme command; hence, only favorable information concerning the battle was made available to the people. At the onset of the war, of course, the news was

<sup>2</sup> Thomas U. Berger, “Norms, Identity and National Security in Germany and Japan,” in *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identities in World Politics*, ed. Peter J. Katzenstein (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 326.

<sup>3</sup> “Revised Report to the Diet and the People by the Shidehara Cabinet,” in *Sources of Japanese Tradition, Vol. II*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. William Theodore de Bary et al. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 1028.

most favorable and so in the first weeks after the attack on Pearl Harbor, victory after victory was reported. The exuberant joy of the Japanese people knew no bounds. Even sophisticated intellectuals reveled in the heady emotional outburst of national pride.<sup>4</sup>

Even when the war began to go badly for the Japanese, the people were told that the emperor's troops were ever-victorious. Of course, this was not a new phenomenon in Japanese policy circles, as much the same had happened in the previous two major wars of Japan, the Sino-Japanese War and the Russo-Japanese War. In the latter war, the Japanese had been very near defeat, though the people knew almost nothing about it because the public was fed only good news, confirming the rhetoric of the militaristic nationalists.

Another reason that the Japanese were surprised by the Allied victory was that the Japanese had overestimated their place in the international order. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the Japanese had thought themselves to be one of the most advanced civilizations. Indeed, during the 1930s, the government and leading intellectuals had begun to advocate that Japan should take its place as the acme of civilization in Asia, and that the country should undertake colonial expansion, in part, in order to spread the Japanese ideal by way of creating the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. In matter of fact, the Japanese were still nowhere near as advanced as the Western countries politically, socially, or militarily, and were destined to lose in the battle of the Pacific.

The Japanese surrender brought to the archipelago the occupying force of the United States, under the command of General Douglas MacArthur. One of the primary goals of the occupational forces, as set forth by MacArthur himself, was the "correction" of "the traditional social order under which the Japanese people for centuries had been

<sup>4</sup> Hane, *Modern Japan: A Historical Survey*, 335-338.

subjugated.”<sup>5</sup> In other words, total social change was the ultimate goal of the Occupation; it was to transform Japan from an agrarian, hierarchical society into a modern, industrial, egalitarian democracy. The first step in this rather daunting task was for the occupation to manufacture a break with the past for the Japanese, especially with the prewar military government. Hence, the American officials offered the Japanese people two reasons why they had lost the war.

The first reason put forth was a moral one. As Berger explains, the Occupation “worked hard to impress upon the German and Japanese people that theirs had been a moral as well as a military defeat.”<sup>6</sup> Such was not a particularly difficult idea to get the Japanese people to accept, as most Japanese “assumed that American military superiority bestowed moral and political superiority as well.”<sup>7</sup> The Japanese worldview was, and remains, very much hierarchical, a view partially derived from the Tokugawa era, when everyone’s place in society was rigidly regulated by the state. That the United States government had bested the Imperial government demonstrated to the Japanese people that the United States government was, by definition, superior. This fact may help explain why the Japanese were so quick to accept not only the American military presence, but also many of the American ideals, such as equality and democracy, that had been previously rejected as inferior to the Japanese way of doing things. Thus, the Japanese quite readily accepted that the responsibility of defeat was their own, as

<sup>5</sup> Douglas MacArthur, “Concerning Required Reforms, October 11, 1945,” in *Sources of Japanese Tradition, Vol. II*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. William Theodore de Bary et al. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 1025.

<sup>6</sup> Berger, “Norms, Identity and National Security in Germany and Japan,” 331.

<sup>7</sup> Robert C. Christopher, *The Japanese Mind: The Goliath Explained* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1983), 24.

demonstrated by the words of Prime Minister Higashikuni Naruhiko (1887-1990), who claimed that Japan's defeat was the result of "the decline of the nation's moral fiber (*kokumin dogi*)" and that the only solution was "collective repentance (*ichioku so-zange*)."<sup>8</sup>

A conflict emerges here between the idea that it was the Japanese themselves who were morally responsible for the defeat and the attempt to build a new government along democratic lines, given that sovereignty in the new government would rest in the hands of the very people responsible for the war in the first place. In order to resolve this conflict, the Occupation offered a second reason for the Japanese defeat, one that has clouded studies of Japanese culture ever since: that a small group of ultra-nationalists were the ultimate culprits in Japan's defeat. Trefalt elaborates:

The Occupation Forces' translation of the meaning of defeat hinged on the idea that a group of expansionist fanatic militants had hijacked the pre-war Japanese government and hoodwinked both the population and the Emperor....The fanatic militarists had forced the Japanese nation into a "valley of darkness" of such irrational scope that defeat had been, and always would have been, inevitable.<sup>9</sup>

Such thinking played well to the Japanese culture, and was quite readily accepted by much of the populace. As Benedict points out, "The Japanese sees that he has made an 'error' in embarking on a course of action which does not achieve its goal. When it fails, he discards it as a lost cause, for he is not conditioned to pursue lost causes."<sup>10</sup> Just as the Japanese victories at the turn of the century had demonstrated the validity of the militarists ideals, so too did the defeat of the Japanese demonstrate that the very same

<sup>8</sup> Quoted in Andrew E. Barshay, "Postwar Social and Political Thought, 1945-90," in *Modern Japanese Thought*, ed. Bob Tadashi Wakabayashi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 273.

<sup>9</sup> Beatrice Trefalt, "War, Commemoration and National Identity in Modern Japan, 1868-1975," in *Nation and Nationalism in Japan*, ed. Sandra Wilson (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2002), 115.

<sup>10</sup> Benedict, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, 305.



ideals were in error. The result being that “the military was blamed for having recklessly dragged the country into a disastrous war that ended in the first occupation of Japan in recorded history and left the Emperor at the mercy of foreign conquerors.”<sup>11</sup>

Such an explanation, while playing well to Japanese cultural assumptions, lacks accuracy. Hane explains,

The war crimes trials placed the responsibility for the war on the shoulders of a handful of leaders. This assumes that the course of history is determined by a small group of men, and that the rest of the populace plays no role in molding the course of events. The Japanese public, however, with the exception of a small minority of thoughtful people, were completely behind the decision for war.<sup>12</sup>

Hane emphasizes that the Japanese populace, while certainly not given all the facts of the war, were indeed almost completely in favor of its initiation and prosecution. It would be absurd to assume that the Japanese themselves suddenly forgot their complicity in the war once they had been defeated; rather, the Japanese took the defeat as a moral loss on the part of Japan itself, proving the inferiority of the Japanese ways in relation to those of the victors. For these reasons, the people were very much willing to accept not only the Occupation itself, but also the rather ludicrous explanation that the entire population of the country had been taken in by a handful of ultra-nationalist militarists. The question that arose from the Japanese perception of the nation's loss of moral fiber was, What do we do now? De Luca sums up the problem:

The tremendous shock of defeat in WWII caused, on the one hand, the complete failure of some traditional, but by then meaningless beliefs, such as militarism and the virtues of obedience, because they were too closely linked to the dishonored past and it raised, on the other hand, the question of what principle should then be

<sup>11</sup> Berger, “Norms, Identity and National Security in Germany and Japan,” 330.

<sup>12</sup> Hane, *Modern Japan: A Historical Survey*, 327.

followed for the nation's proper growth— full modernization, or a, for many reasons improbable, return to a “True Japan.”<sup>13</sup>

This is an old debate, and one which pops up periodically in Japanese thought. We saw its first manifestation with Azumamro, who wished, in establishing a School for National Learning, to find the “true essence“ of Japan. Following the “opening” of the country in 1854, the question had been answered largely with an uneasy alliance between Eastern ideals and Western technology. Defeat, however, demonstrated the apparent worthlessness of the Eastern ideals, paving the way for a complete adoption of Western ways. Hence, Western ideals of egalitarianism, universal suffrage, and liberal democracy began to find their way into the mainstream of Japanese discourse.

It is an interesting paradox that the tactics the Occupation used to engender the above values were the same tactics used by the Meiji leadership to bring about the transformation of Japan at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. As noted in chapter 3, the Meiji Restoration was a top-down event, wherein the leadership remade the country along Western lines without much, if any, input from the citizenry. The Occupation did much the same. Though there was considerably more input from Japanese intellectuals and bureaucrats, the Occupation attempted to remake Japan almost completely from the office of the Supreme Commander. John Dower explains the paradox of this “revolution from above,”

...the defeated Japanese were made the subjects of an unprecedented experiment – audacious in its ethnocentrism but also in its ambition and, until devoured by the Cold War, its idealism. This was an undertaking plagued from the start by contradictions, among them the very notion of “revolution from above.” Enduring political and social revolutions generally emanate from below. Certainly they must ultimately come from within the indigenous society. Never had a genuinely

<sup>13</sup> Maria Constanza De Luca, “Tradition in Modern Japan,” in *Traditional and Modern Japan*, ed. P.G. O'Neill (Tenterden: Paul Norbury Publications, 1981), 1.

democratic revolution been associated with military dictatorship, to say nothing of a neocolonial military dictatorship – which, when all was said and done, is what MacArthur's command was.<sup>14</sup>

This “revolution from above” did not stop at the political or military level, but, like the Meiji Restoration before it, sought to bring about change in every minute facet of Japanese life. Dower explains the extent of the change,

...the revolution from above...would extend to the reform of civil and criminal law, elimination of the “feudalistic” family system that had legally rendered ~~women inferior~~, extension of the right to vote to women, decentralization of police, enactment of a progressive law governing working conditions, revision of both the structure and the curriculum of the education system, renovation of the electoral system, and promotion of greater local autonomy vis-à-vis the central government.<sup>15</sup>

This was all done with an eye to completely restructuring Japanese culture along Western democratic lines. The irony is that in order to do so, the Occupation made use of the most enduring feature of Japanese government, its rigid hierarchical structure. Hence, the Occupation, in trying to completely restructure Japanese culture, used, and reinforced, one of the most enduring and important aspects of Japanese culture, its rigidly hierarchical structure.

In keeping with the cultural restructuring of Japan, some Japanese thinkers at the time made the claim that the defeat should bring about a dramatic change in the socio-political discourse of the country as well, including the end of such antiquated concepts as nationalism. Maruyama Masao (1814-1996), one such individual, wrote:

Japanese nationalism reaches a peak on 15 August 1945. This climax separates two periods in its history so different in background and sphere of operation that it

<sup>14</sup> John W. Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1999), 80 – 81.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 82.

is exceedingly difficult to see its evolution as being a single or continuous development.<sup>16</sup>

Maruyama likened prewar Japan to a patient with a severe psychological disorder, a disorder engendered by the militarists in the government who were fanatical worshippers of the emperor. According to him, “the masses, steeped in darkness and groaning at the base of society”<sup>17</sup> were not active participants in the war efforts, but were the unsuspecting victims of the malicious designs of the emperor worshippers. He further noted that,

...national consciousness did not result from the conquest of traditional social consciousness, but was implanted by a systematic mobilization of traditional values. Consequently, Japan did not produce *citoyens* able to bear the burden of political responsibility in a modern nation-state. In their stead came quantities of loyal but servile lackeys who, entrusting all things to the “upper ranks,” clung fervently to the decisions of authority.<sup>18</sup>

Maruyama here demonstrates, quite prominently, his Marxist roots.

Other Japanese thinkers, while accepting the gist of the Occupation’s explanation of defeat, found the rejectionist stance, such as that expressed by Maruyama, to be unproductive. Kosaka Masaaki, a scholar of the Kyoto School, offers a counterpoint to Maruyama.

The miserable reality of defeat, especially, gave rise to the misperception that everything in the Japanese past and way of life was mistaken, with the result that Japanese history and the national character of the Japanese came to be ignored...If in the rush to point out and eliminate faults among the Japanese, we lack the willingness to cultivate our strengths, it will prove impossible to substantiate new ideals.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Masao Maruyama, “Nationalism in Japan: Its Theoretical Background and Prospects,” trans. David Titus, in Masao Maruyama, *Thought and Behavior in Modern Japanese Politics*, Expanded Edition, ed. Ivan Morris (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), 136.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 146.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Quoted in Andrew E. Barshay, “Postwar Social and Political Thought, 1945-90,” in *Modern Japanese Thought*, ed. Bob Tadashi Wakabayashi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 336.

Kosaka accepted that the Japanese people were morally wrong in prosecuting the Pacific War, but felt that the country should accept its error and continue along the same path it had been traveling. Hence, for Kosaka, unlike Maruyama, the nationalists discourse was not simply to be set aside as entirely wrong, but to be used for the reconstruction of a better society.

Most of the populace, in accepting the explanations put forth by the Occupation, was quite willing to blame the military for the war, advocating a break from the past policies of the militarists and a movement toward peace and prosperity on the Western model. The people were not, however, willing to entertain a wholesale rejection of prewar socio-political culture. Sheldon Garon is quite to the point:

Let us be clear about which aspects of the state and nationalism became discredited....The Japanese public may have repudiated the military, but few rejected the state itself as the guardian of the nation's collective interest. In Japan's darkest hour, economic nationalism not only continued, but [sic] came to define the post-war national mission.<sup>20</sup>

It would certainly be mistaken to assume, as some apparently have, that Japan's defeat in the Pacific War brought about a radical change in the substance of Japanese socio-political culture; rather, what changed was the form which that culture took on. Even the very acceptance of defeat and occupation was due to the cultural viewpoint of the Japanese populace. This is not to say that change did not occur, but only that the change was less a radical alteration of social assumptions, which almost never occurs absent a revolution, than a measured change of form. And, much like in Meiji and prewar Japan, this measuring was done by the same elites who had always been in control

<sup>20</sup> Sheldon Garon, "Saving for 'My Own Good and the Good of the Nation': Economic Nationalism in Modern Japan," in *Nation and Nationalism in Japan*, ed. Sandra Wilson (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2002), 109.

of the government. On December 9, 1945, the *New York Times* reported that the government “machine had been taken apart, but its pieces remain,” and went on to explain that “what has been done to date shows that only a very small section of Japan’s former ruling class has actually been removed from circulation.”<sup>21</sup>

Not only had the ruling class not changed, but neither had its tactics. The nationalist discourse had long proven to be an exceptionally effective rallying point for the Japanese people, a purpose it continued to serve after the war. Only now, the nationalist discourse took on a decidedly different tone, rejecting the militarist appeals and taking on the guise of economic nationalism. Tsurumi explained,

Like the samurai, the Japanese have continued to work for the ideal set for them by the state at the beginning of the Meiji period – to rise on the ladder of civilization. They did their utmost during the war, never criticizing its aims, and when their efforts began to fail they did not direct their intelligence to reformulating the goal set for them. After the defeat, again, they worked for the goal of economic prosperity which the government imposed.<sup>22</sup>

After the defeat, the Japanese leadership began to look for a more efficacious method of achieving the goals set forth in the nationalist discourse. Katzenstein and Okawara state that “since the Meiji Restoration a wealthy nation and a strong military have been the traditional objects of Japanese security policy. With the end of the Pacific War this maxim has been modified rather than abandoned.”<sup>23</sup> The Meiji, Taisho, and Pacific War nationalists all felt that the best way for Japan to achieve primary standing in world affairs was by way of military prowess, a view utterly discredited by the defeat of Japan in the Pacific War. The new leaders felt that the proper way for postwar Japan to

<sup>21</sup> Lindsay Parrott, “Japan’s Ruling Class Still Largely Intact,” *New York Times*, December 9, 1945.

<sup>22</sup> Tsurumi, *An Intellectual History of Wartime Japan 1931–1945*, 19.

<sup>23</sup> Peter J. Katzenstein and Nobuo Okawara, “Japan’s National Security: Structures, Norms and Policies,” *International Security* 17, no. 4 (Spring 1993): 115.

become a major world power was through economic means, and began to play again upon the nationalistic sentiments of the people, this time to encourage economic growth. Garon writes that “nationalistic appeals continued to be used in numerous postwar campaigns to revive the nation’s economy, increase savings, ‘rationalize’ consumption, and encourage consumers to purchase Japanese products.”<sup>24</sup>

Given that the militarists made such effective use of the nationalist discourse, one ~~may assume that using the same~~ discourse so soon after the war would be counter-productive. However, as we have seen, socio-political pride is an old and deeply ingrained concept in Japanese thinking, one that would be difficult to simply sweep aside, even by an event as traumatic as the Pacific War. Instead, the Japanese came to see the militarists themselves, not the nationalism they espoused, as the primary problem. As Berger notes,

In Japan...it was the military institution itself which became the primary target of criticism after the war. Nationalism...was seen more as an instrument of militarist control than as the root cause of the demise of Japan’s brief pre-war democracy and its catastrophic entry into World War II.<sup>25</sup>

Defeat and the subsequent rise of economic nationalism in Japan also produced an interesting cultural shift that has undergirded Japanese culture ever since, and which may be the single most important change to emerge from the ashes of the Pacific War. Often referred to as a “culture of antimilitarism,” an understanding of this shift is pivotal to any understanding of contemporary Japanese security policy. Berger describes this “culture of antimilitarism” as follows:

<sup>24</sup> Garon, *Molding Japanese Minds*, 15.

<sup>25</sup> Thomas U. Berger, “From Sword to Chrysanthemum: Japan’s Culture of Anti-militarism,” *International Security* 17, no. 4 (Spring 1993): 134.

The chief lesson Japan has drawn from these experiences [of the 1930s and the Pacific War] is that the military is a dangerous institution that must be constantly restrained and monitored lest it threaten Japan's postwar democratic order and undermine the peace and prosperity that the nation has enjoyed since 1945. This particular view of the military has become institutionalized in the Japanese political system and not only is supported by Japanese public opinion, but to a surprising degree is shared by large sections of Japan's political and economic elites as well.<sup>26</sup>

This view, naturally, took many years to develop, but its manifestations can be seen immediately after the end of the war, especially in the rejection of the militarist views on a nation-wide scale.

We must not, however, fall into the trap of equivocation. Postwar Japan is often referred to as a "pacifistic country" with a "pacifist constitution." As Jennifer Lind observes, "Japanese society is imbued with pacifist norms."<sup>27</sup> This statement does not necessarily follow from Japan's cultural antimilitarism, which is neither a complete acceptance of pacifistic norms, nor a wholesale rejection of the military itself. Rather, the cultural antimilitarism of Japan is a rejection of the militarism that was discredited by the defeat in the Pacific War. Prior to the defeat, the militarists held a great deal of power, both politically and socially. Hane elaborates on the extent of the power held.

The Meiji government

...established the general staff office in 1879 in order to keep the military independent of civilian control. The supreme command was then placed completely beyond the control of popular forces and even the cabinet under an ordinance issued in 1889 and revised in 1907. On matters concerning military command and military secrets, the chief of the general staff was given the right to report directly to the emperor, thus by-passing the cabinet. The military... acquired the power to intervene in political matters when an imperial ordinance was issued in 1900 that stipulated that only active officers of the top two ranks in the army

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 120.

<sup>27</sup> Jennifer M. Lind, "Pacifism of Passing the Buck? Testing Theories of Japanese Security Policy," *International Security* 29, no. 1 (Summer 2004): 92.



and navy could hold the posts of war and naval ministers. This in effect gave the army and the navy the power to veto cabinets of which they disapproved.<sup>28</sup>

The power of the militarists in the prewar era was independent of any civilian control and rather extensive in Japan's political system. What the culture of antimilitarism rejected was not force proper, nor the military itself, but the idea of a strong, independent military without civilian oversight. As a result, the Japanese political structure since the war has taken pains to ensure that the military, now known as the Self-Defense Force (SDF), is always subservient to civilian oversight.

That the culture of antimilitarism is not the equivalent of pacifism is explained in a rather interesting way by Heginbotham and Samuels, who write that

...public anti-military sentiment has declined drastically over the years. Yet there has been no commensurate change in Japan's reluctance to use military force. This is not because political leaders are morally opposed to the use of force; rather, they question its efficacy.<sup>29</sup>

This statement truly gets to the heart of the matter. Japan's defeat proved the inefficacy of military prowess to accomplish the goals of the nationalist discourse. If anything, Japan's adventures in the Pacific War set Japan back in its quest for primacy. Hence, the culture of antimilitarism firmly rejects the idea that military prowess has the ability to solve the problems facing Japan, or the world as a whole. This is not to say that all people rejected the efficacy of military prowess, as many on the right of the political spectrum continued to advocate a strong armed forces, even after the defeat. However, the prevailing attitude of those in power at the time was that the military would do more to hinder than help Japan on its way to international prominence.

<sup>28</sup> Hane, *Modern Japan: A Historical Survey*, 141.

<sup>29</sup> Eric Heginbotham and Richard J. Samuels, "Japan's Dual Hedge. Not another Britain," *Foreign Affairs* 81, no. 5 (September/October 2002): 112.

Defeat, then, had two interrelated results: the rise of economic nationalism and the rise of a culture of antimilitarism. These two notions complement each other, as militarism is quite expensive and, using history as a guide, would inhibit rather than help Japan achieve its place in the sun. The ultimate goal never changed, nor was the validity of the nationalist discourse seriously questioned by the general public. However, as Japan began to grapple with rebuilding and finding its place in the new world order, a new concept of national security emerged.

### **Paternalism and Dependence**

The discrediting of militarism led to a whole new paradigm of national security in Japanese policy circles. Maruyama wrote that, “in November 1949, the year preceding the outbreak of the Korean War, Prime Minister Yoshida answered a Diet interpellation by saying that non-armament itself was the best guarantee of national security.”<sup>30</sup>

Yoshida Shigeru (1878-1967), who was Prime Minister from May 1946 to May 1947 and again from October 1948 to December 1954, is rightly credited with this new paradigm in Japanese national security thinking, which became known as the Yoshida Doctrine. The Yoshida Doctrine was an exceedingly simple idea, “which proposed that Japan should rely primarily on the United States for external defense while concentrating its energies on economic development.”<sup>31</sup> This doctrine served, at the time, both the interests of the occupied (Japan) and the occupiers (the United States). Postwar Japan was little more than an ash heap, wherein the major industries and commercial concerns had to be rebuilt

<sup>30</sup> Masao Maruyama, “Some Reflections on Article IX of the Constitution,” trans. Frank Baldwin, in *Thought and Behavior in Modern Japanese Politics*, Expanded Edition, ed. Ivan Morris (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), 291.

<sup>31</sup> Thomas U. Berger, *Redefining Japan and the US-Japan Alliance* (New York: Japan Society, 2004), 42.

throughout the country. The Yoshida Doctrine allowed Japan to side-step the great expense of rebuilding and maintaining a traditional military, while freeing up that money for rebuilding the country and repairing relations with neighboring states. The United States initially stood to gain from the doctrine, as it did not have to worry about a remilitarized and belligerent Japan seeking revenge on the nations that bombed it into servility, as Europe faced with Germany following World War I. Second, given that the Cold War was just beginning to heat up, American officials felt that Japan would provide an excellent forward position in the Asian theater to assist in containing the United Socialist Soviet Republic (USSR).

The shrewdness of the Yoshida Doctrine was quickly on display as the Korean War broke out in Asia in 1950. Although the American officials pressed Japan to do more to provide for its own defense, the policymakers in Japan cried that their hands had been tied by Article IX of the American-authored Constitution, which states that,

Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes. In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized.<sup>32</sup>

Japanese policymakers claimed that this article forbade them from participating in the war, even in defending their own home territory. Such an interpretation led then Vice President Nixon, with his usual candor, to state that “it was a mistake for America to have inserted Article IX in the Japanese Constitution.”<sup>33</sup>

<sup>32</sup> “The New Constitution, Chapter II Article IX,” in *Sources of Japanese Tradition, Vol. II: 1600 to 2000*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. William Theodore de Bary et al. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 1032.

<sup>33</sup> Maruyama, “Some Reflections on Article IX of the Constitution,” 292.

For Japan, this interpretation of Article IX, as well as the lucrative contracts to provide supplies and recreation to American servicemen fighting in Korea, proved to be the economic boost needed to bring Japan back to modernization. During the course of the war, the United States spent around US\$4 billion in Japan,<sup>34</sup> which, apparently unreciprocated, did not set well with American policymakers. In the United States, resentment began to grow as American dollars continued to flow into the country, while little seemed to be coming back. As Berger notes, “The Yoshida Doctrine provoked considerable frustration in Washington. Many US officials and commentators were deeply dissatisfied with what they viewed as a blatant case of free riding.”<sup>35</sup>

The Yoshida Doctrine was not, however, a simple case of “free riding.” Rather, there was a geo-strategic logic operating here, based upon Prime Minister Yoshida’s view of postwar national security. While Korea was embroiled in a massive and bloody civil war, much of Southeast Asia was fighting for independence in often gruesome and grueling guerrilla wars. In China, the Nationalist, led by Chiang Kai-shek, had just been defeated by the Communists, led by Mao Tse-dong. The latter quickly aligned with the USSR to form what Westerners referred to as “the Communist Block.” Furthermore, the USSR was beginning to flex its muscles in international affairs. Being on the winning side during World War II and, subsequently, being granted a permanent seat at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), emboldened Stalin to make the USSR an international superpower. Japan in the early 1950s lived in a rough neighborhood. Looking at all of this, the Japanese policymakers knew that making any attempt to remilitarize and make use of a new Japanese military in Asia would most certainly create myriad more

<sup>34</sup> Hane, *Modern Japan: A Historical Survey*, 408.

<sup>35</sup> Berger, *Redefining Japan and the US-Japan Alliance*, 42.

problems than it would solve. Furthermore, such action would most certainly make the implementation of the goals of the nationalist discourse quite impossible, as economic rebuilding could not be accomplished if Japan found itself again enmeshed in ongoing military conflict in the region. Hence, the Japanese made good use of Article IX and the Yoshida Doctrine, with the correct assumption that, “as long as Japan remained aligned with Washington and permitted the US to set up military bases, the United States was likely to continue to provide Japan with the support it held to be essential.”<sup>36</sup>

Washington did continue to provide the support and defense that Japan needed, but began to forcefully request greater concessions from Tokyo. American policymakers, after all, cared less for the geo-strategic problems facing Japan than for the interests and welfare of the United States. More important for our purposes, this was the beginning of a series of cultural and political misunderstandings on the part of American policymakers toward Japan, the 1951 Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement being the first step down this road. According to the original United States-Japan Security Treaty, signed on September 8, 1951, Japan was to “*increasingly assume responsibility* for its own defense against direct and indirect aggression, always avoiding any armament which could be an offensive threat or serve other than to promote peace and security (emphasis added).”<sup>37</sup> The language used here is exceedingly vague, allowing for a wide interpretation, which Japanese policymakers felt was very much to their advantage. Not having to entertain the expense of developing and maintaining an armed force allowed these policymakers to concentrate upon what they felt was the best method for securing

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>37</sup> “Security Treaty Between the United States and Japan, September 8, 1951,” Avalon Project at Yale Law School, [www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/diplomacy/japan/japan001.htm](http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/diplomacy/japan/japan001.htm) (accessed: February 20, 2007).

Japan's borders from attack: economic advancement and regional inter-dependence.

With the military having lost its efficacy in advancing the goals of the nationalist discourse, the Japanese saw that the best method would be to build Japan into a rich, thriving economy and to link this economy with those surrounding it.

Subtleties of Japanese policy were of no interest to American policymakers at the time, however, who were fighting on the Korean peninsula as part of a larger battle to contain the growing threat of Communism in Europe and Asia. From this, the 1954 treaty was born. This treaty contained much stronger language, in which

...the United States of America, in the interest of peace and security, would maintain certain of its armed forces in and about Japan *as a provisional arrangement in the expectation* that Japan will itself increasingly assume responsibility for its own defense (emphasis added).<sup>38</sup>

This stronger language has three important consequences. First, it provided the impetus for the creation of the SDF, and the reintroduction of the military into the Japanese culture, events that were not very well received by the Japanese public. The immediate effect of this was a debate on the nature of the Constitution, especially Article IX. According to Maruyama, the elections of 1955 were the origins of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) which has ruled Japan, with the exception of a brief hiatus, ever since its inception.<sup>39</sup> Maruyama points out that the LDP was a “conservative merger” of political parties in November 1955, and that “the conservatives’ constant assurances that they will not touch the basic spirit of the present Constitution dates from the general

<sup>38</sup> “US and Japan Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement, March 8, 1954,” Primary Sources: Workshops in American History, [www.learner.org/channel/workshops/primarysources/coldwar/docs/usjapan.html](http://www.learner.org/channel/workshops/primarysources/coldwar/docs/usjapan.html) (accessed: March 20, 2006).

<sup>39</sup> The LDP did experience a brief hiatus from power in the early 1990s, but very quickly returned to power.

election of February 1955.”<sup>40</sup> Talk of altering the Constitution was met with exceptional hostility by the Japanese public, so too was the SDF itself. As I.I. Morris observed in 1958, “The popular feeling towards the defense forces has tended to be one of indifference, bordering on suspicion and hostility.”<sup>41</sup>

The second ramification was the beginning of the era of paternalism and dependence. Immediately following the resumption of sovereignty, the Japanese leadership saw itself as an equal of the United States on the international scene, free to pursue its policies as it saw fit. Hence, the government immediately set about economic reform, not even bothering to address the issue of rearming the military until 1954, after the United States forced the hands of the Japanese. According to Sakamoto Kazuya, “Japan’s best possible contribution to security was thought to lie not in military cooperation, but in economic efforts to sustain America’s deterrent power and to promote the prosperity of free societies by fortifying Japan’s own economic strength.”<sup>42</sup>

In forcing the hands of the Japanese policymakers, however, Washington demonstrated just how unequal the partnership truly was. Japanese policymakers increasingly found themselves unable to execute their own policies without paying deference to the interests of the United States, leading to a system in which Japanese decisions were subject to the paternalistic oversight of the Americans. Funabashi explains,

Accustomed to the deep-rooted hierarchical relationships in Japanese society, Japanese leaders found it difficult to execute an effective foreign policy based on equality. The leadership developed a psychology of dependence – a tendency to

<sup>40</sup> Maruyama, “Some Reflections on Article IX of the Constitution,” 293.

<sup>41</sup> I.I. Morris, “Significance of the Military in Post-War Japan,” *Pacific Affairs* 31, no. 1 (March 1958): 10.

<sup>42</sup> Sakamoto Kazuya, “Advancing the Japan-US Alliance,” *Japan Quarterly* 48, no. 2 (April/June 2001): 22.

view America as a big brother– and failed to assert a distinctively Japanese foreign policy.<sup>43</sup>

This is an exceptional example of Japanese cultural norms affecting, here adversely, the relationship of Japan with the other nations of the world. This paternalism has colored the relationship between the United States and Japan to the present day, and has greatly inhibited the ability of the Japanese to achieve the goals of the nationalist discourse.

Finally, the Mutual Security Treaty of 1951 marked the beginning of a rocky US-Japan alliance, based upon mutual distrust and anxiety as to the actions and goals of the other party. This situation quickly degenerated to the point whereby “in the 1960s and ‘70s the US-Japan alliance seemed an alliance in name only. The two nations’ militaries did not even formally consult with one another about what to do in the event of an attack on the Japanese home islands.”<sup>44</sup> One scholar refers to this phenomenon as “bureaucratic autopilot.”<sup>45</sup> Tetsuo Maeda is much less generous in his language, stating that “the ties between Japan and the United States, while usually characterized as an alliance, have long been patched together by no more than a flimsy band-aid.”<sup>46</sup>

Just how rocky this relationship became was clearly demonstrated by the so-called “Nixon Shocks.” In 1971, President Richard Nixon announced that he would visit the People’s Republic of China without consulting his alliance partners or making any attempt to assuage their fears of such a meeting. Understandably, this led to much anxiety on the part of Japanese policymakers, who felt that it was entirely possible that

<sup>43</sup> Yoichi Funabashi, “Japan and the New World Order,” *Foreign Affairs* 50, no. 5 (Winter 1991/1992): 62.

<sup>44</sup> Berger, *Redefining Japan and the US-Japan Alliance*, 43.

<sup>45</sup> Kurt M. Campbell, “Energizing the US-Japan Security Partnership,” *Washington Quarterly* 23, no. 4 (Autumn 2000): 125.

<sup>46</sup> Tetsuo Maeda, “The Unbelievable ‘Lightness’ of the US-Japan Alliance: The Ehime-maru Incident in Historical Perspective,” *Japan in the World*, [www.iwanami.co.jp/jpworld/text/ehime-maru01.html](http://www.iwanami.co.jp/jpworld/text/ehime-maru01.html) (accessed: October 24, 2006).



they were being sidelined in the name of American interests. The immediate results of Nixon's visit to China were twofold. First, Japan immediately followed the lead of the United States and reached an agreement for the formalization of political ties in 1972. Second, Japan began an extensive revamping of the SDF, working under the assumption that American interests were beginning to diverge from those of defending the archipelago. Lind outlines this revamping:

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In the early 1950s, Japan began its initial steps toward rearmament, acquiring US hand-me-downs and other less modern systems. As late as 1970, Japan had acquired only one guided missile destroyer and fielded Korean War-vintage aircraft. Starting in the late 1970s, Japan took steps that would transform it into one of the world's major military powers. Tokyo acquired a world-class airforce. ...[it] undertook a substantial naval buildup.<sup>47</sup>

The problems of the 1970s led to a new treaty between the two countries, the Guidelines for Japan-US Defense Cooperation of November 27, 1978. This treaty made contingency provisions for the invasion of the archipelago, as well as explaining that

Japan, as its defense policy, will possess defense capability on an appropriate scale within the scope necessary for self-defense.... The United States will maintain a nuclear deterrent capability, and the forward deployments of combat-ready forces and other forces capable of reinforcing them.<sup>48</sup>

This treaty was the beginning of what became known as "Sword and Shield" (*tate-yari*) defense. Under this arrangement, "the United States would be responsible for offensive operations, while Japan would provide intelligence and logistical support."<sup>49</sup> Though this new arrangement left the alliance asymmetrical, it did result in more independence for the Japanese to pursue their own interests. Up to this point, Japanese thinkers, especially in

<sup>47</sup> Lind, "Pacifism or Passing the Buck? Testing Theories of Japanese Security Policy," 111.

<sup>48</sup> "Guidelines for Japan-US Defense Cooperation, November 27, 1978," Japan Defense Agency, [www.jda.go/e/policy/f\\_work/sisinle.htm](http://www.jda.go/e/policy/f_work/sisinle.htm). (accessed: November 21, 2005).

<sup>49</sup> Berger, *Redefining Japan and the US-Japan Alliance*, 58.

national security matters, had been constrained by the ambiguity of Washington's shifting interests. Now, with the position of each better defined, Japan was able to pursue its own interests, so long as they stayed within the proscribed boundaries. A further consequence of the 1978 treaty was that Japanese policymakers now had more freedom to pursue the goals of the nationalist discourse, helping to spur the explosion of nationalist fervor in the 1980s. While the era of paternalism had not come to an end, as it continues in some ways today, Big Brother had loosened its gaze, freeing the Japanese to better pursue their national interests. This began with a redefinition of security itself.

### Emerging from the Shadows

Akaha Tsuneo wrote that, "In the early 1980s Japan adopted a 'comprehensive security' (*sogo anzen hoshō*) policy, with greater emphasis on economic and diplomatic means than on military means for pursuing the nation's security."<sup>50</sup> This idea well echoed Yoshida's assertion, quoted above, that the military was not the best way to meet the problems facing Japan. Such a stance was not possible between 1954 and 1978, since during this time, as we have seen, the policy of the United States wavered between, on the one hand, pushing Japan to assume greater responsibility, and on the other hand, presenting ambiguity concerning American interests in East Asia and Japan's place therein. By 1980, the situation had change a great deal. The Korean and Vietnam wars were over, China and Japan had decided to improve their relations, and the Japanese had undertaken a extensive modernization and expansion of their SDF. This all culminated in the 1978 Guidelines, quoted above, which was much clearer in stating where the United

<sup>50</sup> Akaha Tsuneo, "Japan's Comprehensive Security Policy: A New East Asian Environment," *Asian Survey* 31, no. 4 (April 1991): 324.

States and Japan stood on protection of the archipelago. Hence, Japan was freed once again to pursue its own interests in the area. This freedom was somewhat tempered by the Oil Crisis in the mid-1970s, which demonstrated, in stark detail, the extent of the Japanese dependence on foreign sources of energy. Thus, in 1980, a committee appointed by Prime Minister Ohira Masayoshi (1910-1980) laid out this new idea of “comprehensive security,” which had three levels:

- (1) self-help or self-defense,
- (2) efforts to render the whole international system conducive to Japanese security,
- (3) intermediate-level efforts to build a favorable security environment in the region.<sup>51</sup>

The primary method of achieving “a favorable security environment” was economic, rather than militaristic. The new military’s primary purpose was not to project Japanese power abroad, but only to ensure the safety of the homeland itself. Japanese policymakers saw quite clearly that the world, even during the Cold War, was economically and culturally interconnected, and becoming more so with every passing day. Militaristic adventures would do little to ensure the stability of such an interconnected world, but would tear this world apart, resulting in economic instability and destruction. Hence, the Japanese felt the most effective way to ensure the security of the homeland was to build upon the economic interdependence of states. To be sure, the Japanese were making these decisions from behind the safety of the nuclear umbrella of the United States, whose deterrent power the Japanese happily used to their advantage. Such does not take away from the methods or ideas of Japanese policymakers at the time;

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 325.

rather, it simply demonstrates the unique position these thinkers enjoyed in coming to their decisions.

The keys to accomplishing the goals of the “comprehensive security” paradigm were threefold. First, Japan began an ambitious and generous program of Official Development Assistance (ODA). As Hays explained it,

...until the late 1970s, aid was tied to the promotion of exports and economic interdependence, especially with countries in Asia. Now there is greater emphasis on humanitarian assistance and aid to promote strategic interests...in fiscal 1988 [Japan was] the world's largest donor, exceeding the United States by a considerable amount.<sup>52</sup>

Hays noted that such largesse came with a great deal of criticism, as the ODA was “primarily guided by the need to secure economic and resource interests. There is also some concern that Japan may link development assistance to a campaign designed to further its international economic dominance.”<sup>53</sup>

Here, we see two aspects of Japan's new comprehensive security paradigm at work. First, in granting ODA to secure energy resources, Japan was moving toward increasing self-reliance, or “self-help.” Second, it was also part of the “intermediate-level efforts” to build a favorable regional environment. In assisting the countries of Asia, especially Southeast Asia and China, Japan began to lay the groundwork for greater regional economic cooperation, not only making Japan more secure, but also ensuring that the sea lanes in Southeast Asia remained open in order to transport the energy and goods Japan needed to sustain itself.

In addition to economic assistance, Japan also led the way in regional political cooperation. Berger explains that, “The Japanese government has sought to promote and

<sup>52</sup> Louis D. Hayes, *Introduction to Japanese Politics* (New York: Paragon House, 1992), 230.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 230.

secure its regional economic interests by deepening political relations with various Asian governments on bilateral and multilateral levels.”<sup>54</sup> This is also a part of the Japanese desire to create a regional environment wherein the Japanese archipelago may be secure. According to Berger, the idea has proved its efficacy, as “the promotion of economic growth and peaceful cooperation may well help to stabilize the region.”<sup>55</sup>

The second of the three pillars of the comprehensive security policy, making “the whole international system conducive to Japanese security,” is obviously the most ambitious part of the paradigm, but not necessarily unworkable. In putting forth this aspect of the paradigm, Japanese policymakers actually advocated a deceptively simple plan: to help create a world so economically interdependent and devoid of militarist sentiment as to ensure the safety of the Japanese homeland, and, concurrently, push Japan to a leading position in international affairs. Such efforts work on two levels: one regional and one global. We discussed many of Japan’s regional-level accomplishments, and will look in greater depth at the global-level one in the following chapter. Suffice it to say here that, globally, Japan has been quite hyperactive in promoting this idea. Japanese policymakers have made good use of the United Nations, providing a large amount of aid and fully embracing the ideals set forth in the United Nations Charter. Furthermore, Japan has engaged in a number of social, political, and cultural exchanges with many of the countries around the world. In essence, the Japanese efforts to bring the world to a state more conducive to Japanese security are well underway.

Japan’s hyperactivity on the international scene, along with the impressive performance of the Japanese economy in the early 1980s, led to a number of problems,

<sup>54</sup> Berger, *Redefining Japan and the US-Japan Alliance*, 63.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

however. While Japanese leaders worked exceptionally hard at furthering the goals of the United Nations, they were given little credit for their efforts at that institution. Similarly, Japanese largesse in ODA was often met with suspicion and cynicism on the part of recipient countries, while any effort to ensure the safety of the Japanese archipelago by way of an expanded SDF was scrutinized and quickly derided by other countries of Asia. For every step Japan tried to take forward, it was forced back two. The result of this was a second wave of introspective nationalism during the mid-1980s well into the 1990s. In the eyes of the Japanese people, Japan had repaid its neighbors for the actions of the Pacific War with words, deeds, and hard cash. However, Japan was still not receiving the recognition it deserved, and the goal of making Japan a major world power seemed as far off as ever.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONTEMPORARY NATIONALISM AND NATIONAL SECURITY

One of the primary strengths of the culturalist model is the descriptive accuracy that it allows. The culturalist model, as opposed to either neo-realism or neo-liberalism, serves a utilitarian purpose for policymakers trying to understand the actions of a government, resulting partially from the fact that the culturalist model looks at the process of state identity formation. Katzenstein and Okawara explain,

[State interests] are shaped...by the normative context that defines standards of appropriate behavior. Analyzing how such standards gradually change make it possible to unravel the process by which interests that inform foreign policy are formulated in the first place. Because domestic structures and norms are shaped by history, so, indirectly, is the process of foreign policy choice.<sup>1</sup>

The cultural assumptions of any given state, which are molded by the process of history, limit the viable decision choices available to policymakers. The end result of all the decisions is the same, the maximization of power, but the path to that maximization and how power is defined by that particular culture are unique to each civilization. By examining the cultural evolution of a given civilization to understand the premises used by policymakers, the culturalist model allows outside observers to better understand the assumptions of the culture and helps to predict the decisions of its leaders, especially regarding matters of national security. Katzenstein and his co-authors write that “variations in state identity, or changes in state identity, affect the national security

<sup>1</sup> Katzenstein and Okawara, “Japan’s National Security: Structures, Norms and Policies,” 86.

interests or policies of states. Identities both generate and shape interests....many national security interests depend upon a particular construction of self-identity.”<sup>2</sup>

The present chapter looks at the contemporary manifestation of the nationalist discourse, as well as its effects upon Japanese national security. The cultural assumptions that have undergirded the decisions of the Japanese policymakers up to this time remain constant, though the international environment has undergone a series of dramatic changes, from the suspected waning of American power, to the end of the Cold War, the rise of China, and the problems of international terrorism. Throughout these changes, Japanese policymakers have remained steadfast in their goal of elevating Japan to a place of prominence in international affairs.

The objective of elevating Japan's status in the international community is well reflected in the area of Japanese security policy. Along with the dramatic changes in the international scene, the international security environment also has undergone significant change. This is especially true in the Asian theater where Cold War bipolarity has given way to an inherently unstable multipolar situation wherein several powers, the United States, Japan, Russia, India and China, are vying with one another for prominence in regional affairs.<sup>3</sup> As Richard K. Betts described the situation, “Superficially, the region appears fairly peaceful at present, but the security order that will replace the Cold War

<sup>2</sup> Peter J. Katzenstein, Ronald L. Jepperson, and Alexander Wendt, “Norms, Identity and Culture in National Security,” in *Culture of National Security: Norms and Identities in World Politics*, ed. P.J. Katzenstein (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 60.

<sup>3</sup> Some may be tempted to add the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) to this list. However, as Friedberg notes, “ASEAN...has never been much more than a loose collection of the region's less powerful states.” Such will probably remain the case well into the future. The success of ASEAN, especially the ARF, has less to do with the fact that ASEAN is becoming a force to be reckoned with than the fact that these fora are useful to the other powers of the region, i.e., China and Japan, in furthering their own goals. See Aaron L. Friedberg, “Ripe for Rivalry: Prospects for Peace in a Multipolar Asia,” *International Security* 18, no. 3 (Winter 1993-1994): 22.



framework is not yet clear.”<sup>4</sup> Although Betts wrote these words over a decade ago, they remain true to this day, as the security situation in Asia has become more complex and unstable. For example, since the publication of Betts’s essay, the People’s Republic of China (PRC) has more than trebled the amount of money spent on the military,<sup>5</sup> while the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) allegedly has managed to acquire nuclear weapons. Further, territorial disputes among the various nations of the region continue to simmer. All of these developments have helped to shape the current manifestation of Japanese nationalism and security policy.

### **“Resurgent” Nationalism**

The onset of the 1980s saw a new confidence among the Japanese, and with good reason. Thirty-five years had passed since Japan’s defeat in the Pacific War, and the Japanese people had made good use of that time not only to repair their country from the devastation of war, but also to build one of the top economies in the world. Much of this success was due to continued adherence to the Yoshida Doctrine, discussed in the previous chapter, which freed Japanese policymakers from the cumbersome and expensive act of creating and maintaining an offensive armed force. Indeed, the Yoshida Doctrine allowed Japan to maintain only a minimal defensive force, albeit one of the best in the world, and thus, the Japanese concentrated on economic growth and building good will with their neighbors through a generous ODA program.

<sup>4</sup> Richard K. Betts, “Wealth, Power, and Instability: East Asia and the United States after the Cold War,” *International Security* 18, no 3 (Winter 1993-1994): 34.

<sup>5</sup> According to the Pentagon’s “2006 Annual Report to Congress: Military Power of the People’s Republic of China,” [www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/2006/2006-prc-military-power04/html](http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/2006/2006-prc-military-power04/html) (accessed: March 13, 2007). According to the *Economist*, the PRC is again raising its military budget by 18 percent. See, “Caught between Left and Right, Town and Country,” *Economist*, March 10, 2007, 24.

By the 1980s, however, the Yoshida Doctrine came to be seen by many observers, both inside and outside the country, as a cowardly way to go about international relations, leading many to call for a more forceful diplomacy commensurate with the economic strength of Japan. This call came in tandem with a new manifestation of the Japanese nationalist discourse known as the *nihonjinron*. Yoshino explains, “The *nihonjinron*, which literally means ‘discussions of the Japanese,’ refer to the vast array of literature which thinking elites have produced to define the uniqueness of Japanese culture, society and national character.”<sup>6</sup> He goes on to distinguish the *nihonjinron* from academic research and thought, approvingly quoting Peter Dale’s notion that “the *nihonjinron* [was] ‘the commercialized expression of modern Japanese nationalism.’”<sup>7</sup> The *nihonjinron*, unsurprisingly, maintained many of the same assumptions of the earlier manifestations of the nationalist discourse, that is, Japan, due to its unique history, culture, and geography, deserved pride of place among nations. Kenneth Pyle elaborates:

The surge of self-confidence was evidenced by the veritable tide of success literature that flooded the bookstores. Scores of books were written about the reasons for Japanese success; their common theme was an emphasis upon the unique characteristics of the Japanese people and their culture. Japan had outstripped the economic performance of other industrial countries, went the usual explanation, because its historically formed institutions had proven more productive and competitive than those of all other countries.<sup>8</sup>

There is a sense of inevitability here; the Japanese, because of their unique history, were determined to outperform other countries of the world economically. This sense of cultural pride came with an interesting, if not wholly unexpected, twist. Iida Tsuneo wrote that,

<sup>6</sup> Yoshino, *Cultural Nationalism in Contemporary Japan*, 2.

<sup>7</sup> Peter Dale, *The Myth of Japanese Uniqueness*, quoted in *ibid.*, 3.

<sup>8</sup> Kenneth B. Pyle, *The Japanese Question: Power and Purpose in a New Era* (Washington, DC: AEI Press, 1992), 50.

Generally speaking, then, in terms of achieving the ideals of democracy, egalitarianism, and individualism and in maintaining a competitive (economic) mechanism, Japan may appear to be an ordinary nation. But, this “ordinariness” is only in appearance. The fact of the matter is that what are “principles” (*tatema*) in the Western nations have become “reality” (*honne*) in Japan.<sup>9</sup>

Not only, according to Iida’s line of thought, had Japan surpassed Western nations in the economic sphere, but also its people had perfected the very ideals undergirding Western civilization. These same ideals had been rejected by the prewar Japanese as “foreign.” One can hear the resounding echo of Fukuzawa in Iida’s sentiments.

Fukuzawa, as discussed in chapter 3, argued that all civilizations evolve and that Western powers were not the final version of this evolution, only the best achieved so far. Hence, the Japanese people were to emulate Western civilizations until such a time as they could surpass them. During the 1930s, many Japanese thinkers assumed, with disastrous results, that they, in fact, had achieved parity with the West and were ready to surpass it. Here again, five decades on, we see the very same kind of thinking emerge from Japan which, once again, had caught up with the West. The results this time around were quite different, given the fact that antimilitarism had become fully ingrained in Japanese political culture and prominence by way of military prowess had largely lost legitimacy in world affairs. In Japan, rather, the renewed sense of cultural superiority gave rise to what Pyle calls “new internationalism,” which he defines as “based on a confident belief that the nation was destined by its unique economic, scientific, and cultural skills to be the pioneer of a new stage of technology and that this would project Japan into the role of global leadership.”<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Iida Tsuneo, “*Nippon-teki chikara-zuyosa*,” quoted in *ibid.*, 56.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.

The sense of superiority resulting from belief in the inevitability of cultural evolution, unlike its earlier manifestation in the 1930s, arose with a great deal of self-doubt on the part of the Japanese. Many thinkers wondered if Japan had the wherewithal to grasp its new situation and to assume the mantle of world leadership, an act which would mean competition to its oldest ally and protector, the United States. Tokyo Governor Ishihara Shintaro gives voice to some of these fears when he states that Japan has “not quite gotten over the experience of defeat and occupation.”<sup>11</sup> He goes on to say that,

To use the technology card in the high-stakes poker game of international politics, Japan's leaders must have skill and guts. But I wonder if any of them can see Japan's new standing in the proper historical perspective.... In the last forty years, many countries have gone through profound transformations. De-Stalinization forced the Soviets to question the infallibility of their political leadership. Mao Zedong launched the Cultural Revolution in a bid to root out bourgeois values. The Vietnam War made many Americans see their country in a different light. But in Japan, the postwar mentality has lingered to the present day.<sup>12</sup>

Ishihara feels that Japan's defeat in the Pacific War has continued to haunt Japanese policymakers to the present day, making them weary of risk and neutering any chance of Japan's becoming an international superpower. Given that Japan has spent the last few decades apologizing to its neighbors for the war, while giving large sums in aid and ODA, as well as paying deference to the United States in matters of international import, one can understand this point of view. However, Ishihara is mistaken for two important reasons.

First, he wrongly credits Japan's defeat with the emasculation of its policymakers.

<sup>11</sup> Shintaro Ishihara, *The Japan that Can Say No* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991), 25.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 24-25.

Japan's defeat did have a dramatic impact on all aspects of Japanese culture, including its socio-political culture, as we have seen. However, it does not follow that the risk-adverse policy of the Japanese government is derived from this event alone; such a stance ignores much of the prewar history of Japanese politics, which also tended to be risk-adverse. For example, the Manchurian Incident was carried out by rebellious factions of the Kwangtung army, and only belatedly supported by the government when popular support became insurmountable. Furthermore, the Pacific War was opposed by many Japanese thinkers, including many high-level military men, and undertaken only after several attempts at a diplomatic solution faltered.

A better explanation for the problems that plagued the Japanese leadership in the postwar decades has to do with the “follower nation” role that Japan has played on the international stage. Ronald Dore explains,

It is in the nature of a late-developer – and Japan is the most thoroughgoing case of deliberate state-led catching-up industrialization and modernization of all the industrial countries – that its internal policies find their source and motivation in external considerations....The Japan in which the present generation of Japanese leaders grew up and in which their habits of mind were formed was still a consciously “modernizing” Japan. Their preoccupation with “the full recognition of Japan”...has not left them.<sup>13</sup>

The problems that Ishihara laments did not begin at the moment of defeat; rather, they have been long-standing issues in Japanese politics, which have their roots in the single-minded focus of the Meiji leaders to catch up with the West. Japanese policymakers knew only the goal of catching up to the West, and had designed their institutions specifically for that purpose. As Pyle notes,

...the century-long pursuit of equality with the West had left its mark on all of Japan's institutions. They were designed to promote a uniform and disciplined

<sup>13</sup> Ronald Dore, “The Internationalisation of Japan,” *Pacific Affairs* 52, no. 4 (Winter 1979-1980): 600.

national effort to achieve that goal. They were also designed to insulate Japan from direct influence by foreign companies and individuals.<sup>14</sup>

Stated succinctly, the Japanese had built a culture of insularity and followership that hampered its ability to make bold moves on the international scene. Ironically, it was all done with an eye to eventually assuming the mantle of world leadership.

The second reason why Ishihara is mistaken has to do with the very doctrine which was intended to shoot Japan to the top in international affairs.

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Ironically, the Yoshida Doctrine, which was partly intended to restore Japan's international reputation by projecting a peaceful image, ultimately demeaned Japan's stature. Consciously avoiding international controversy, maintaining a low posture, and limiting its public statements to platitudes, Japan cut almost no image on the world stage, where its political leaders were of little stature.<sup>15</sup>

The Yoshida Doctrine was not simply a matter of avoiding military confrontation; rather, it was an effort to avoid any type of controversy that would imperil Japan's second attempt at great power status. Yoshida recognized that antagonizing trading partners would most assuredly make economic growth difficult, a fact forcefully driven home by the oil shocks of the mid-1970s.

Whether Ishihara and the rest of the *nihonjinron* were mistaken in their assumptions is largely a moot question. To them, the issue was not the nuances of history, but the simple fact that Japan had the number two economy in the world, yet received little, if any, credit for all its actions on the world scene. The *Washington Post*, explained that, "A feeling has begun to percolate through the nation that it is time to be

<sup>14</sup> Pyle, *The Japanese Question*, 82.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

more than just a rich cousin who signs checks. Tokyo now wants a say in deciding how its money will be used, and to what end.”<sup>16</sup>

The *nihonjinron* of the 1970s, and especially the 1980s, led to a surge of popular resentment against Japan’s critics on the part of the Japanese people. They felt that they had been sidelined long enough and were irritated not only by the inaction of their own leaders, but also by the Western powers, especially Japan’s purported ally, the United States. As the Cold War came to an end, this resentment began to build among Japanese policymakers as well, especially during the First Gulf War. According to the *Washington Post*,

Many Japanese...resented Washington’s high-handed extension of its Cold War leadership role to the first post-Cold War crisis. Widely reported in the Japanese press – although hardly noticed in the United States – were criticisms of the idea that America should simply decide to make war and forward the bill. Many in the ruling party, having waged an epic legislative battle to appropriate \$13 billion in war funds, were left feeling their contribution was unappreciated.<sup>17</sup>

The 1980s ended poorly for the Japanese. At the beginning of the decade, Japan was riding high on well-deserved economic clout, only to be pushed aside as the Cold War came to an end. The *nihonjinron* of the early part of the decade ended in frustration as Japan continued to be a bit-player on the international stage. Furthermore, as all of the Japanese frustration was coming to a head in the early 1990s, the Japanese economy burst, forcing it into a slump from which it has never truly recovered, further frustrating the nationalists’ hope of attaining great power status for their country. These developments, as well as the evolution of the international system following the Cold

<sup>16</sup> Ayako Doi and Kim Willenson, “Room at the Top: Japan’s Quest for Superpower Parity,” *Washington Post*, March 1, 1992.

<sup>17</sup> Ayako Doi and Kim Willenson, “Japan: Back to the Past? The Idea of a Co-Prosperity Sphere – Again,” *Washington Post*, April 11, 1991.

War, led to new thinking in Japan about the role of the military and the nature of Japanese national security, beginning with the First Gulf War in 1991.

### **Post-Cold War Japan**

In the later part of 1990, the Iraqi government decided to invade and annex its smaller neighbor, Kuwait, an action universally condemned by the world community. The United States, working under a United Nations mandate, took the leadership role in expelling the Iraqi troops from Kuwaiti soil. In so doing, the United States called upon its various allies to provide support, in terms of both money and manpower, to ensure the success of Operation Desert Storm. While most allies stepped up to the plate, Japan demurred. Initially arguing that its hands were tied by Article IX of the Japanese Constitution, Tokyo eventually agreed to send US\$13 billion to help the war effort, but would not send troops into combat. Many observers in the United States, quite correctly, perceived the Article IX argument as an excuse, leading to increased resentment toward the Japanese. The economic success of Japan, after all, appeared to some American policymakers to come at the expense of the American taxpayer. While the United States picked up the tab for Japan's defense, the Japanese trade surplus with the United States grew through the 1970s and the 1980s, leading to much friction between the two countries. While American policymakers were correct in perceiving the Article IX argument as an excuse, they were wrong in their understanding of what the actual motives of the Japanese were. Washington generally assumed that Tokyo wished to continue Japan's free ride under the Yoshida Doctrine. This explanation, however, falls short for several reasons.



First, one must remember the comprehensive security idea of Prime Minister Ohira introduced in chapter 4. The primary facet of this paradigm was the concept of “self-help,” an idea that was initially derived from the Oil Shocks of the mid-1970s. As was mentioned before, Japan depends on foreign sources for over 90 percent of its energy, a fact which would make self-help impossible were the country to find itself on the bad side of the oil-producing states. As Purrington explains, “[Japan] was caught between demands by its US ally to play a more prominent role, and the risk of undermining its traditional policy of maintaining good relations with all Arab nations in order to assure a stable oil supply.”<sup>18</sup> The author notes that “Japan’s financial support was not clearly articulated until it was clear that a majority within the Arab world supported US diplomacy.”<sup>19</sup> In other words, the Japanese government was not simply dragging its feet over supporting the United States; rather, it was looking after its own interests, in keeping with the comprehensive security paradigm. It seems unlikely, after all, that the United States would have guaranteed replacement of the energy resources lost to Japan by its angering the Arab world, especially given the friction between the two countries at the time.

The second reason that Japanese support was not immediately forthcoming was domestic. Berger writes that, “although most Japanese condemned the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, many Japanese preferred to see the United States as a bully, overeager to resort to armed force in the Gulf in order to reaffirm its global hegemonic role.”<sup>20</sup> The Japanese people were still angry over the subservient role their country had adopted, despite their

<sup>18</sup> Courtney Purrington and A.K., “Tokyo’s Policy Responses during the Gulf Crisis,” *Asian Survey* 31, no. 4 (April 1991): 308.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 311.

<sup>20</sup> Thomas U. Berger, “From Sword to Chrysanthemum: Japan’s Culture of Anti-Militarism,” 129.

economic success. The fact that Tokyo was so eager to appease Washington made many Japanese, especially those participating in the nationalist discourse, extremely angry. Purrington writes that “advocates of autonomous diplomacy were critical of how the government meekly followed US diplomacy, and argued that Japan should take advantage of the fact that it had never dirtied its hand in the Middle East.”<sup>21</sup>

The problem for many Japanese nationalists was that the Gulf Crisis was an opportunity lost. The crisis occurred before the bubble burst in the Japanese economy, and at a time when the Japanese people felt that the government should begin to take actions commensurate with the economic clout of the country. Rather than doing so, however, Tokyo decided to kowtow to the United States. The end result of this was continued subservience to policymakers in Washington. Ishihara is quite damning in his appraisal of the situation:

The problem...is partly the unwillingness of Japanese officials to stand up to Washington. They believe deference, even to the point of servility, is safer than confrontation. This pervasive attitude stems from our defeat in World War II. To call this stance a foreign policy would be a misnomer; it is the acceptance of the subordinate status of a tributary state.<sup>22</sup>

While one may argue as to the accuracy of Ishihara’s description of the situation, his appraisal of the cause of Japan’s apparent cowardice is most assuredly mistaken. Japan’s defeat in the Pacific War did not leave so deep a mark on Japanese foreign policy as what came after, namely, the Yoshida Doctrine. According to Pyle, this doctrine “provided a justification for rejecting world politics and devoting national energies entirely to rebuilding the national livelihood.”<sup>23</sup> Until the 1980s, the efficacy of this explanation was unquestionable. Although American policymakers may have grumbled about

<sup>21</sup> Purrington, and A.K., “Tokyo’s Policy Responses during the Gulf Crisis,” 320.

<sup>22</sup> Ishihara, *The Japan that Can Say No*, 67-68.

<sup>23</sup> Pyle, *The Japanese Question*, 46.

supporting Japanese defense and granting favorable trade rights to the country, they could not really argue that Japan was not in need of economic rebuilding.

As the 1980s progressed, this explanation became less persuasive, but the Japanese retained one key card: the Cold War. Although the United States remained angry at Japanese practices, the archipelago itself proved an invaluable forward base from which to contain not only the USSR, but the DPRK and the PRC as well. When the Cold War ended in the latter part of the decade, the Japanese lost this excuse. The Gulf Crisis proved to be a turning point in both the Japanese nationalist discourse and Japanese security policy. Funabashi Yoichi explains,

The Gulf War was a unique phenomenon. The war itself crystallized and magnified issues that Japan should have addressed long ago. For Japan the crisis was, in a way, a day of reckoning. It broke out precisely when the gap was most pronounced between Japan's underdeveloped political capacity and its seemingly uncontrollable economic expansion. The outcome was shocking, rudely awakening Japan to its inability to cope with a crisis affecting its vital interests. The lesson was that the international environment in the 1990's will no longer allow Japan to follow the same one-dimensional economic strategy it has single-mindedly pursued for the past forty years.<sup>24</sup>

There are two ways of looking at the crisis, both of which are accurate to some degree. First, we could say that the Japanese had caught up with the West again economically, but had lost the opportunity to act like a responsible international power. In learning this lesson, Japan should then undertake more independent foreign and security policies, commensurate with the needs of the Japanese people. Such an explanation would be supported by the nationalist discourse.

The other way of looking at the crisis was to interpret it as another defeat. Observers of Japan often talk about a "victimization complex" on the part of the populace. Christopher explains,

<sup>24</sup> Yoichi Funabashi, "Japan and the New World Order," *Foreign Affairs* 70, no. 5 (Winter 1991-1992), 59.

In its most basic form, the perennial Japanese conviction that there is almost certainly trouble around the corner probably was inspired by the typhoons and earthquakes that have been ravaging the Japanese islands for all of recorded history. And that conviction can scarcely have failed to be reinforced by the fact that it was the Japanese who in 1945 became the first – and so far only – people in the world to suffer atomic attack....Because of Japan's almost total dependence on imported energy and the fact that it possesses so few of the other resources required by modern industry, Japanese never forget that any prolonged interruption of their imports – or, for that matter, foreign rejection of the Japanese exports to pay for those imports – would thrust Japan back into an economic status roughly comparable to that of Yemen.<sup>25</sup>

Given this observation, any rebuff on the international scene could be perceived by those in power as being a setback for Japan and its foreign policy. The fact that the Cold War had ended meant that American bases in Japan were no longer as vital as they had been, further limiting the clout that Japan could exercise in Washington. Had American policymakers taken advantage of this to severely limit Japanese imports in an effort to smooth out trade imbalances unfavorable to the United States, the results for the Japanese economy would have been disastrous. Hence, the Gulf Crisis was a defeat for the Japanese government because it demonstrated to them that sheer economic prowess would not guarantee primacy on the international stage. The parallel to the defeat of the Pacific War is obvious: in the run up to that war, the Japanese leadership assumed that military-industrial strength would lead to a status of equality with Western nations. Japan's defeat in World War II proved that view to be wrong. The postwar Japanese leadership believed that Japan's economic clout would lead to a status of equality on the international stage. The end of the Cold War and Gulf Crisis, together, proved them wrong. Hence, the Japanese public fell into what Berger calls "double victimization, a

<sup>25</sup> Christopher, *The Japanese Mind: The Goliath Explained*, 51-52.

feeling that Japan was victimized not only by the outside powers, but also by the Japanese military and the state in general.”<sup>26</sup>

Just like Japan’s defeat in the Pacific War, however, the defeat experienced in the Gulf Crisis led Japan to a new way of viewing itself and its relationship to the world at large. Following the Crisis, Funabashi wrote, “Japan must now define its objectives and world role more clearly than at any time in the past forty years. It can no longer merely respond to the international environment and measure itself quantitatively.”<sup>27</sup>

Essentially, the Gulf Crisis demonstrated to the Japanese policymakers that the efficacy of the Yoshida Doctrine was no longer viable, just like defeat in the Pacific War proved that military prowess had lost its efficacy. The problem was that the entirety of the Japanese government, all the institutions and policy processes, was predicated upon the Yoshida Doctrine. It is not that Japan did not have an alternative paradigm to use, the Ohira concept of comprehensive security; rather, the problem was that, given the risk-adverse nature of Japanese policymaking in general, a shock was necessary to redirect the leadership onto a new path. Such shocks had occurred twice before, once in 1853 with the arrival of Commodore Perry, and again in 1945 with the defeat of Japan and its occupation. The Gulf Crisis provided the third shock, which redirected Japanese policy away from the Yoshida Doctrine and toward comprehensive security.

In 1992, Japan began moving toward a policy of comprehensive security by sending SDF troops to participate in Peacekeeping Operations (PKOs) in Cambodia. Although this action was met with a mixture of trepidation and anticipation by the nations of East Asia, and by the Japanese public, it largely was hailed as a success. Naturally,

<sup>26</sup> Berger, *Redefining Japan and the US-Japan Alliance*, 30.

<sup>27</sup> Funabashi, “Japan and the New World Order,” 61.

with the predominant interpretation of the Japanese Constitution being one which bars troops from engaging in combat, the government had to pass stringent laws regulating the actions of the SDF members in order to assuage public concern, both inside and outside the country. The result was the International Peace Cooperation Law (IPCL), which outlined five necessary conditions for SDF participation in PKOs:

1. There must be an agreement among the combatants to stop fighting.
2. The disputing parties must agree to accept UN peacekeeping forces.
3. All parties to the conflict must adopt positions of neutrality.
4. PKF [peace keeping forces] may use arms only in personal self-defense, not to protect personal property or territory.
5. Forces will be withdrawn if the agreement to stop fighting is breached.<sup>28</sup>

These regulations, which remain in place today, severely restrict the actions of the SDF to the point where they are hardly worthy of being called a military force in the traditional sense. The key here, however, is not for Japan to show prowess, but to demonstrate that Japan is a benign, responsible world power that is willing to engage in collective security when needed. In other words, the action was more symbolic than substantial. Since its initial step in 1992, Japan has continued to participate in PKOs around the world, including in Africa in the 1990s and in East Timor in 1999. The immediate result of these actions was the assuagement of much of the criticism, both domestic and international, that plagued the Japanese leadership following the Gulf Crisis.

At the same time that Japan was attempting to remake its image on the world stage, other developments were affecting Japan's national security. First, the economic bubble burst in 1991, adversely affecting the tide of public opinion. This is not to say that the nationalist discourse disappeared; rather, it was tempered for a time by the fact that its newest claim to Japanese superiority, Japan's powerhouse economy, proved to be

<sup>28</sup> Louis D. Hayes, *Introduction to Japanese Politics*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2005), 266.

short-lived. The 1990s gave way to a massive decline in the Japanese economy and the arrival of the economic demon, stagflation. This economic situation was further exacerbated by the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis. Japan remained one of the top world economies, to be sure, but the seemingly unstoppable engine of economic growth slowed down to a snail's pace.

Two other issues arose concerning Japan's neighbors. During the early 1990s, the DPRK undertook a number of provocative military maneuvers. These exercises were not actually aimed at Japan, but at Japan's closest ally, the United States. What followed was the 1993-1994 Nuclear Crisis, wherein the DPRK threatened to pull out of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and resume its nuclear weapons program. This crisis came to a temporary end with the 1994 Agreed Framework, in which the United States agreed to build two light-water reactors on DPRK soil by 2003, providing massive subsidies of fuel until the project was completed. Although the Japanese leadership most assuredly understood the DPRK actions for what they were - efforts on the part of the hermit kingdom to blackmail the United States into giving it more aid - they were also shaken by the fact that this close neighbor had become increasingly belligerent. Add to this the historical animosity between the Korean peninsula and Japan, and one can easily see why DPRK actions would shake Japanese policymakers.

The second significant development affecting Japanese security policy was the rise of China. By the mid-1990s, Deng Xiaoping's policies of measured economic liberalization had begun to have their effect, turning the country into one of the world's fastest growing economies and a potential international political power to be reckoned with. Two major problems with this growth centered on the dual issues of China's policy

on Taiwan, and its propensity to pour much of its profits into the People's Liberation Army (PLA). In fact, China's ambitions for economic growth so alarmed the Japanese that,

The 1996 Japanese Defense White Paper...for the first time expressed alarm about China's growing armed forces and says that China has replaced the former Soviet Union as the prime focus of Japan's security attention. The Defense Agency expressed a need to "keep a close watch on China."<sup>29</sup>

This view was shared by many of the policymakers in Washington as well.

All of these factors came together in 1996 with the Japan-US Joint Declaration on Security Alliance for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. This declaration was much the same as the earlier security treaties in affirming closer cooperation between the two countries and emphasizing continued American troop commitment in the archipelago. The primary area in which this declaration differed from the earlier treaties was in that it allowed for "cooperation in dealing with situations that may emerge in the *areas surrounding Japan* (emphasis added)."<sup>30</sup> This was an important step in Japanese national security policy.

Until the 1990s, the SDF had been confined almost exclusively to the Japanese archipelago itself; and even there, its actions were strictly limited. The Gulf Crisis emphasized to Japan that it was necessary to do more than just pick up part of the tab for its allies' military adventures in order to be a fully responsible member of the international community. The result was the IPCL and increased presence of the SDF on the international scene. This fact, combined with an increasingly unstable situation in Asia, led the Japanese to seek license for greater activity in the area of security. It must be emphasized that this provision did not grant autonomy for the SDF outside the

<sup>29</sup> Chalmers Johnson, "Containing China: US and Japan Drift Toward Disaster," *Japan Quarterly* 43, no. 4 (October/December 1996): 15.

<sup>30</sup> "Japan-US Joint Declaration on Security-Alliance for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, April 17, 1996," Tentative Unofficial Translation, [www.jda.go.jp/e/policy/f\\_work/sengen\\_.htm](http://www.jda.go.jp/e/policy/f_work/sengen_.htm) (accessed: November 21, 2005).



archipelago; rather, it allowed for the SDF to participate in joint actions with American forces outside the territorial waters of Japan. According to the 1998 United States Security Strategy for the East Asia-Pacific Region, the SDF would now provide “rear area support to US forces responding to a regional contingency.”<sup>31</sup> The report states that “the concept ‘situations in areas surrounding Japan’ embodied in the revised guidelines is not geographical, but situational.”<sup>32</sup> In essence, the Japanese were obligated to assist American troops in any situation wherein such assistance was deemed appropriate.

This new security agreement was a part of a step-by-step process of reintegrating Japan’s SDF into the collective security arrangements of the international community. Japan could not rise to international prominence without proving, concurrently, that it had no intentions of military domination, and that it was willing to take upon itself part of the responsibility for the collective defense of international security. Of course, the Japanese leadership had to be cautious, given the prevalent antimilitarism of the Japanese political culture. As a result, progress proceeded stepwise and usually by taking advantage of the various threats emerging in the areas surrounding the Japanese islands. Many observers of this process tend to label Japanese policymaking as “reactive.” This is not a wholly inaccurate description of the situation, especially given the risk-adverse nature of Japanese decision making. However, one must keep in mind that these actions were all undertaken for the purpose of making Japan a major world power. As a result of the intricate balance in the international community, Japan’s slow, measured changes in policy have been less reactionary than a conscious effort to achieve an independent foreign policy and political prominence internationally. Hence, every new development

<sup>31</sup> United States Department of Defense, “The 1998 United States Security Strategy for the East Asia-Pacific Region,” [www.dod.gov](http://www.dod.gov) (accessed: November 21, 2005), 20.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 21.

in the international scene has given Japan a new opportunity with which to move up the ladder. The events of September 11, 2001, were one such opportunity.

### **National Security in the Post- 9/11 World**

According to Thomas U. Berger, the 1990s are often referred to as the “lost decade” in Japan.<sup>33</sup> After being chastised by the United States for its perceived reluctance to help in the First Gulf War, Japan entered a period of slow growth, demographic decline, and increased security concerns in the Asian theater. Resentment on the part of the Japanese public began to grow, not only because of the sluggish economy, but also because of the simple fact that the government seemed utterly incapable of making independent decisions on the world scene commensurate with the economic power of the country. Furthermore, as China became more economically powerful, it began to throw its weight around in Asia, largely at the expense of its immediate neighbor and primary competition for regional influence, Japan. The result of this was mutual animosity on the part of the Chinese and Japanese publics. Much of the problem centered, purportedly, around the issue of Yasukuni, the Shinto shrine where the Japanese war dead are honored. In 1978, fourteen designated World War II war criminals were enshrined there. As George Will points out, this was not much of a problem until fairly recently.

Between the enshrinement and 1984, three prime ministers visited Yasukuni 20 times without eliciting protests from China. But both of Japan’s most important East Asian neighbors, China and South Korea, now have national identities partly derived from their experience as victims of Japan’s 1910-1945 militarism. To a significant extent, such national identities are political choices.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Berger, *Redefining Japan and the US-Japan Alliance*, 13.

<sup>34</sup> George Will, “Yasukuni Memorial Mystifies Americans,” *Daily Record*, August 20, 2006.

As China has grown increasingly prosperous, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has lost much of its legitimacy due to its apparent inability to control local corruption, remediate the problems of rural and urban poverty, and generally improve the livelihood of its vast number of rural people. Rather than seriously address these issues, the Chinese leadership has spent much of the early part of this century deflecting its people's anger away from the CCP and toward Japan. The end result was that tensions increased to the point where the Chinese officials simply refused to deal with Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro, waiting until his successor took office.<sup>35</sup>

By the dawn of the new millennium, a significant segment of the Japanese populace had grown tired of continuously being relegated to a second-tier position in the international community, and had begun to display an increasingly assertive form of nationalism. As Jim Kelly, a former State Department official, explained, "Japan is tired of constantly apologizing, and it wants a place in the sun more than in a pure [sic] economic sense."<sup>36</sup> Eugene Matthews makes a similar assertion:

For the past two decades, visits by Japanese leaders to the memorial [Yasukuni] have been one of the most common sources of friction between Japan and its neighbors.... These countries complain that since many Japanese war criminals are buried at the site, Japanese leaders should refrain from making official visits. Yasukuni, however, is Japan's equivalent of Arlington National Cemetery— as well as war criminals, the country's most honored military heroes lie there, and it is unrealistic to expect the government to ignore them. Moreover, the Japanese public has grown weary of the apologies its government is continually pressured into making over its behavior before and during the war. Many Japanese now feel that their country has apologized enough for its actions 60 years ago and think Tokyo should start asserting itself.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Many commentators have suggested that this breaking off of diplomatic relations for the duration of Koizumi's term was yet another political ploy and did not reflect actual animosity on the part of the CCP. This interpretation is most likely correct, given the economic relations of the two countries, as well as the fact that Abe's conservatism, more to the right of Koizumi, has not stopped the CCP from reinstating talks.

<sup>36</sup> Quoted in Richard Lowrey, "Time for the Sun to Rise," *National Review*, July 4, 2005, 29.

<sup>37</sup> Matthews, "Japan's New Nationalism," 79.

The problem is not with the nationalists' desire for a more assertive policy; rather, it is the method with which Japan might pursue such a policy. Given that all of Japan's neighbors continue to ruminate about the country's militaristic activities during the Pacific War, an assertive policy is virtually impossible for Japanese policymakers to put forth without serious international consequences. Any action on the part of the Japanese that was viewed by their neighbors as aggressive would most certainly carry with it dire consequences. The only cover that the Japanese leadership had was the US-Japan alliance, which the Japanese leadership attempted to strengthen during the mid-1990s, only to be lost in American domestic politics. It was 9/11 and the response of the international community to the attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon that gave Japan the impetus to make a bold move forward in its quest to become a recognized world power.

The events of 9/11 and their aftermath are often considered to be paradigm-altering; that is, we now distinguish between the "pre-9/11" era and the "post-9/11" era. The reality of the situation, however, is not so much that the world changed, but that the attention of the world leadership was refocused. Around the world, 9/11 provided a rhetorical excuse for the continuation of actions already in process. In Russia, the fighting in Chechnya was reframed as a battle against terror; the same happened in China with the Muslim separatists in Xianjiang. And so it was with many other countries facing domestic uprisings.

For the Japanese nationalists, 9/11 proved to be an excellent opportunity to revamp the country's military (SDF) and to resume the drive toward being a fully recognized global power. The first step in this process was the passage of the Anti-

Terrorism Special Measures Law, which allowed for an “active and proactive [sic] contribution to the efforts by the international society toward prevention and eradication of international terrorism.”<sup>38</sup> The speed with which this law was passed, and the expanded role of the SDF that it allowed, are in stark contrast to the actions of Japan during the Gulf War crisis. Internal critics of the Japanese government, especially those of a pacifistic bent, were quick to accuse the government of toadying to the United States yet again. However, placed in context, it becomes obvious that the passage of the antiterrorism law was not intended solely to prevent American criticism of Japan’s recalcitrance in the War on Terror, but also to give Japan the chance it needed to be a responsible and respected member of the world community. The lessons of the Gulf Crisis were well understood by the Japanese leadership.

That the Japanese intention to enhance its military capabilities was meant to make it a responsible member of the international community is made clear by the 2005 National Defense Program Guidelines (NDPG). In this document, the Japanese Defense Agency (JDA)<sup>39</sup> noted that,

...the use of military force now plays a broader role in the international community than simply deterring or responding to armed conflict. Military force is also used for a variety of purposes, including the prevention of conflict and the [sic] reconstruction assistance.<sup>40</sup>

The logic is impeccable: given that the nature of the enemy has changed (from state to nonstate actors), the implication is that the use of the military should change as well.

Militaries are no longer exclusively used to fight wars, but also to render humanitarian

<sup>38</sup> Japanese Defense Agency, “Defense of Japan 2006,” [www.mod.go.jp](http://www.mod.go.jp), 277 (accessed: March 13, 2007).

<sup>39</sup> The JDA has since been upgraded to the Ministry of Defense (MOD), which is discussed below. At the time of the NDPG publication, however, the agency was still called the JDA. Hence, using JDA here is more accurate than MOD.

<sup>40</sup> Japanese Defense Agency, “National Defense Program Guidelines, FY 2005,” [www.mod.go.jp](http://www.mod.go.jp), 2 (accessed: March 19, 2007).

aid and preemptively act to prevent conflict from occurring. This new interpretation of the application of the military allowed the Japanese to side-step much of the criticism that would have resulted in revamping the SDF along traditional military lines. Furthermore, this redefinition is well in keeping with Japan's culture of antimilitarism. The culture of antimilitarism, as discussed in chapter 3, revolves round the fact that the military no longer has any efficacy in helping Japan to move toward primacy in world affairs. However, with the role of the SDF redefined in terms which are not traditionally militaristic, the SDF can demonstrate that it still is useful, but in different areas, namely, humanitarian assistance and conflict prevention. All of this was spelled out in the 2006 JDA white paper,

The basic policy for Japan's security set under the NDPG to ensure the country's peace and security has specified two goals and calls for Japan to take a three-way approach to achieve them. These goals are to eliminate chances that threats will affect Japan by improving the international security environment, in addition to making efforts to prevent Japan from being exposed to threats and to eliminate such possibilities. These goals were set on the basis of the recognition that was shared following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States that the occurrence of events in regions far from Japan is capable of posing a threat to Japan and affecting the country.<sup>41</sup>

The thinking behind this new paradigm is quite ingenious. Following the attacks on 9/11, the United States initiated wars in both Afghanistan and Iraq. The justification, to paraphrase President George W. Bush, was to fight enemies abroad so that we would not have to fight them at home. Japanese policymakers followed their close ally and the sole superpower in using the same argument to undergo a revamping and greater normalization of the Japanese military. Hence, the 9/11 attacks provided the circumstances that Japanese policymakers needed to take major steps toward normalizing Japan's military.

<sup>41</sup> JDA, "Defense of Japan 2006," 276.

Late in 2006, the Japanese Diet passed a bill that would take the SDF closer to becoming a standard military. The bill allowed for the upgrade of the Japanese Defense Agency to a ministerial level post, the Ministry of Defense. The Japanese defense department had long been kept at the agency level for a number of reasons. First, it helped to assuage regional fears of resurgent Japanese militarism. Second, it was well in keeping with the Japanese postwar culture of antimilitarism, which advocated strict civilian control of the military and maintenance of only the minimum forces necessary for defense. The Gulf Crisis, however, had demonstrated to the Japanese leadership that a military that could be deployed in missions overseas was an absolute necessity if Japan were to become an influential member of the international community. Furthermore, the increased duties undertaken by the SDF after 9/11, including its reconstruction activities in Iraq, seemed to necessitate a more independent department, capable of responding quickly to situations as they arose. Hence, early in 2007, the JDA was upgraded to the Ministry of Defense (MOD).

Prior to the upgrade, the *Japan Times* ran an editorial in which it noted that the new MOD prerogatives, in addition to defending the homeland, would include “humanitarian relief activities abroad, peacekeeping operations under the United Nations and rear-support activities for the U.S. armed forces around Japan in emergency situations.”<sup>42</sup> While this sounds benign enough, the article also pointed out the possible, and somewhat insidious, ramifications of this upgrade:

...if the SDF missions overseas are upgraded to main missions, the SDF will be able to possess long-range aircraft for the purpose of transporting SDF members involved in overseas missions. There may also arise a move to relax weapons-use restrictions placed on SDF members abroad. In the worst case, other nations could view the SDF's possession of long-range transport aircraft as a preliminary

<sup>42</sup> “Upgrading SDF's Overseas Activities,” *Japan Times*, December 5, 2006 (accessed: December 4, 2006).

step toward gradually acquiring the ability to project its power abroad, which would run counter to the “defense only” policy.<sup>43</sup>

Given that the underlying goal of the Japanese government, in keeping with the consistency and power of the nationalist discourse, is for Japan to attain primacy in the international community, and that this can be done only with a viable military force, the understanding of the Japanese military moves quoted above may not be too far off the mark.

— In order for a full normalization of the Japanese military to occur, two things would have to happen. First, the military would have to again demonstrate its efficacy. This, as we have seen, has already occurred, following the criticism of Japan’s handling of the Gulf Crisis and the more recent upgrade of the SDF. Second, the culture of Japan would have to undergo another shift, this time away from antimilitarism. Such a shift is currently underway, driven by a combination of demographics, frustrated nationalism, and increasingly belligerent neighbors. As Richard Samuels observes, “Pacifist ideas about prosperity and autonomy seem relics of an earlier, more idealistic time when Japan could not imagine, much less openly plan for, military contingencies.”<sup>44</sup>

Japan is currently facing a demographic crisis. The average age of the population has risen dramatically and very soon the country will not have enough working young to support the elderly. One corollary of this is that the generation that lived through the events of the Pacific War, which ended over sixty years ago, is dying out and the new generation is beginning to question Japan’s lack of military prowess compared not only to other developed world powers, but also to regional ones.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Richard J. Samuels, “Japan’s Goldilocks Strategy,” *Washington Quarterly* 29, no. 4 (Autumn 2006), 119.



The demographic shift is also helping to give rise to the second reason for the shift toward a normalized military: frustrated nationalism. Matthews elaborates:

...many in Japan are starting to feel that it is unnatural for a country with Japan's international stature not to have a standing army....Japan's younger citizens were reared during a time when their country's economic success bred a strong sense of pride and honor. These Japanese grew up expecting their homeland to take the lead in Asia. Over the last 12 years, they have watched with dismay as their economy has languished in an extended recession and the country's influence has waned.<sup>45</sup>

This frustrated nationalism has led to an increasingly belligerent public, as well as to stronger talk on security issues on the part of the Japanese leadership. One example has to do with the recent testing of a nuclear device by the DPRK. When the United Nations undertook efforts to isolate the DPRK until it agreed to return to the Six-Party Talks and suspend its nuclear program, the Japanese government advocated much stronger language and undertook drastic efforts at home to undermine the regime, such as banning all trips between the two countries. The movement of people between the two countries is an important source of income for the DPRK, not only because of the large Korean population in Japan, but also because many Pachinko parlors in Japan are owned by North Koreans who send their profits back to the home country.

The increasingly assertive Japanese nationalism has even led many high-level policymakers to bring up formerly taboo topics, such as full rearmament and even the acquisition of nuclear weapons. The cause of much of the increasingly belligerent nationalism is the increasingly antagonistic actions of the DPRK and the PRC. As one former Japanese official, Nakayama Masaaki, stated, "You know how quickly a North Korean or Chinese missile could land in Japan? We have no spare time in case of an

<sup>45</sup> Matthews, "Japan's New Nationalism," 80.

attack.”<sup>46</sup> This type of insecurity is rife in Japanese policy circles, and is serving as much of the impetus for normalization of the military and an increasingly assertive foreign policy.

In sum, Japan currently is in the process of a cultural shift, the end result of which is still unclear. Nearly two decades after the end of the Cold War, it is still uncertain what the balance of power will be in Asia. As China and India rise and the DPRK becomes less of a threat and more of a nuisance, the regional balance of power will continue to shift in unpredictable ways. What is certain is that actions on the part of the Japanese are apt to remain in keeping with the goals of the nationalist discourse: to catch up with and surpass the advanced nations on the international stage, the very same goals set during the Meiji era that have undergirded Japanese policy ever since.

The events of 9/11 have had quite a paradoxical effect: in targeting nonstate actors, the states involved in the “War on Terror” have actually strengthened their own hands. This is most clearly demonstrated in the United States, where the Patriot Act granted the government of the United States sweeping powers, largely anathema to the decentralized principles of the federation. A similar effect occurred in Japan, where the “War on Terror” gave the government the impetus it needed to make larger strides toward normalization of Japan’s military and its place in the international community.

World domination is no longer the ultimate goal of the Japanese government; rather, the goal now is to ensure the political power and general recognition that is commensurate with the nation’s status as a world power. This goal is becoming increasingly difficult due to the hostility of the PRC toward Japan’s striving for regional

<sup>46</sup> Quoted in Joshua Kurlantzick, “Rising Sun,” *New Republic*, October 24, 2005, 12.

and international recognition, as the Chinese fancy themselves the next superpower and are not interested in allowing for the development of any rivals.

However this contest among contending powers plays out in the end, the nationalist discourse in Japan will likely continue to be dominant and the nationalist goals will likely continue to undergird the actions of the Japanese policymakers, especially in the area of national security. The only way for American policymakers to make informed decisions about achieving America's goals in Asia today is to understand this fact, so as to enact effective policies. The advisable content of such policies will be addressed in the concluding chapter.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSIONS

Realism predicts that all states will act in such a way as to maximize their power, while leaving some leeway for what a given state will define as power. The culturalist model attempts to explain what a state is likely to understand as power by analyzing its cultural assumptions. In the case of Japan, its policymakers, at least since the Meiji era, have viewed power as recognized parity with the world's great powers. The quest for recognition as an equal – some would say dominant – international power has undergirded the decisions of Japanese policymakers since before Commodore Matthew Perry made his first visit to Japan, and continues to be a driving force in the decisions that are made at the upper levels of the Japanese government. Using the analogy of the formal logical argument, we may posit the following:

All States will act in such a way as to maximize their power.

The Japanese understand power to be recognized parity with the world's greatest powers.

Therefore, the Japanese government will act to maximize its recognition as a prominent world power.

This argument is supported by an analysis of the actions of the Japanese state over the past century and a half.

One could argue that the conclusion drawn about Japanese power is far too broad, given that most states would like to be major world powers. However, this criticism overlooks the contemporary nuances of the Japanese understanding of world power. as stated in the introduction, the international situation, combined with the cultural

assumptions of a civilization, will limit the viable options available for that state. In other words, some states have neither the capability nor the desire to be great powers, and other may have different ideas about what great power status entails. A good comparison may be Japan's neighbor, China. China, by all appearances, is moving with single-minded determination to become a hegemon in Asia and a superpower in the international community. Unlike Japan, China's move toward great power status includes not only economic dominance, but also military prowess and cultural primacy, all the hallmarks of a superpower currently enjoyed by the United States alone. In contrast to China is Japan's neighbor in the southwest, Australia. This country does not seem to have aspirations of becoming a superpower, although it appears to want to become a significant regional player in Asia.

Japan, in contrast to Australia, has done all it can to become a major player in world affairs. When one avenue has not worked, such as the militarism of the 1930s or the pure economic focus of the 1970s and 1980s, Japanese policymakers have switched gears and tried a different tack to achieve the same goal. In keeping with this pragmatic flexibility, Japan today is pursuing a hard-line in matters of Asia, especially in relation to the DPRK and the PRC, in part by beginning to abandon its antimilitarist posture in an attempt to prove that it is a responsible member of the international community. The Japanese Defense Agency, no longer subsumed under the aegis of a minor cabinet official, has been renamed the Ministry of Defense, and is headed by an official with full ministerial rank.

One could argue that the upgrade of the SDF to the MOD has less to do with Japan's quest for international prestige than with the unstable reality of the security and

political situations throughout Asia. Although there may be some truth to this, the way that the military is being used lends credence to the assumption that the expanded role of the SDF is primarily symbolic and being used to buttress Japan's claim to be a world leader, as demonstrated by the severe restrictions placed on SDF personnel in past PKOs and currently in Iraq. The PRC and DPRK are two more perceived threats which, as some scholars have put forth, is driving Japan's military revamping. What this viewpoint fails to take into account is that the United States is the primary defender of the Japanese archipelago and will be so for the foreseeable future. While the PRC's defense spending has increased dramatically over the past few decades, in real dollar terms, technological sophistication, and combat experience, it will be several more decades before the People's Liberation Army (PLA) can prove a credible threat to the American armed forces. Of course, Japan may eventually have to drop many of the restrictions upon its SDF personnel and begin to build power projection capabilities. For the time being, however, Japan's use of its military is more that of a symbol than a deterrent.

The immediate results of the new tack in Japan are difficult to foresee for a number of reasons. First, the world, and especially Asia, is in a state of uncertainty as to the balance of power. While the United States is likely to remain the international hegemon for decades to come, many observers have argued that its power is beginning to wane, due to political complications surrounding the country's unilateral streak, the declining dollar, and the growth of many Third World countries to the point of providing credible competition to the United States politically, militarily, and economically. Hence, the international order is becoming increasingly competitive and unstable. Japan's place in this shifting balance of power will depend largely upon how the Japanese

come to view themselves and their place in the international community. According to Richard Samuels,

Japan's repositioning [in the shifting balance of power] will not be linear. A new consensus will depend on the selection and construction of a national identity, whether Japan comes to see itself as a great power or middle power and whether it will define its role in regional or global terms.<sup>1</sup>

Samuels is correct in asserting that Japan's place in the next balance of power will depend upon the construction of a national identity; however, it seems unlikely that Japan would ever settle for anything less than full recognition as a world power. This is due mainly to the strength and prevalence of the nationalist discourse, the goals of which undergird Japanese policymaking.

The second problem is the nature of international politics in Asia. The Japanese economy has begun to show signs of life again, at the same time that the PRC is flexing its own muscles, particularly in Asia. The region is plagued by many problems, including territorial disputes, historical animosities, and general distrust among regional players. One thing all these states may agree on is that preserving the status quo is the best for maintaining economic growth. Donald Zagoria writes, "For the first time in many decades the great powers in the region recognize that they have a common interest in regional stability and prosperity."<sup>2</sup> The celebrations should not begin too quickly, however, as Asia has long been an area of instability in world affairs. That the regional players appear to think that political stability is in their immediate interests does not indicate that the End of History has dawned in Asia. Rather, it is prudent to understand that, although economic prosperity is currently the goal of all players, once this goal has

<sup>1</sup> Richard J. Samuels, "Japan's Goldilocks Strategy," 124.

<sup>2</sup> Donald S. Zagoria, "East Asian Security Challenges," *American Foreign Policy Interests* 29 (January 2007): 11.

been reached - or sufficiently frustrated - conflict is just as likely to erupt as it previously has. And, given that Asia is home to two of the world's most secretive countries, the PRC and the DPRK, serious problems may be much closer at hand than anyone can predict.

Another problem in making predictions concerns the nature of the Japanese populace itself. The current study has dealt largely with elite opinion, both in academia and in policy circles. As mentioned in chapter 3, the nationalist discourse was prevalent almost exclusively among the well-educated and well-connected until the turn of the nineteenth century. Even as its popularity has spread, the leading voices of the nationalist discourse have tended to be the political and academic elite, such as the militarists of the 1930s, Prime Minister Nakasone and Tokyo Governor Ishihara Shintaro in the 1980s, and leading members of the LDP today. As with any country, however, elite opinion may vary somewhat with the opinions of the populace at large. In Japan, this variation may be less dramatic than in many other developed countries for a number of reasons. First, the Japanese populace is one of the most polled in the world, allowing the leadership to keep good tabs on the general feelings of the people and to adjust accordingly. Furthermore, the popularity of Japanese-centric literature, such as the *nihonjinron* and other nationalistic works, indicates that the ardent feelings of nationalism, discussed in this thesis, are much more widespread in Japan than in most developed countries. Given the exceptional ethnic and cultural homogeneity of the country, this is not particularly surprising.<sup>3</sup> However, it is difficult to predict how the general Japanese populace – wherein a large segment has adopted pacifistic ideals since Japan's defeat in the Pacific

<sup>3</sup> For an interesting view of just how culturally ingrained Japanese-centric sentiments are, see Norimitsu Onishi, "Ugly Images of Asian Rivals Become Best Sellers in Japan," *New York Times*, November 19, 2005.



War -will deal with many of the changes required of Japan if it is to become a great power. This is particularly true in relation to the transformation of the SDF. The Japanese press has not been kind to Prime Minister Abe Shinzo in his push to turn the JDA into the MOD. Furthermore, the DPRK's alleged testing of a nuclear device has sparked a debate about the possibility of Japan's acquiring nuclear arms, a national discussion which is marked by great hostility between the contending sides that hold radically different views. Ultimately, what kind of player Japan will become internationally depends largely upon what the leadership can sell to the people. Presently, given the uncertain balance of power in Asia, just how far the Japanese are willing to go to elevate their international stature is difficult to ascertain.

One thing that is highly likely is that the nationalist discourse will continue to gain strength on the Japanese archipelago. The nationalist discourse has been dominant among the elite since the time of the Meiji Restoration, becoming an increasingly popular phenomenon with the Japanese military victories at the turn of the twentieth century. The nationalist discourse was the driving force behind the rapid modernization of the late 1800s and the early part of the twentieth century, and later it was behind the economic recovery following the Pacific War. Today, it continues to be the dominant form of discourse in Japanese political debates.

The nationalist discourse has not been the only reason for the miracle of Japan's recovery following the Pacific War, however; much credit also goes to the US-Japan alliance, in which the United States picked up the tab for much of Japan's defense. Over the years, the alliance has been bumpy. From the late 1960s until the early 1990s, the alliance barely limped along, as both sides became very good at ignoring one another. In

the early 1990s, several factors contributed to a resurgent interest in strengthening the alliance, including the Gulf Crisis in 1991, the DPRK nuclear standoff in 1994, and an increasingly assertive PRC. This resurgent interest in the alliance, however, would prove to be short-lived as the various crises were – temporarily- resolved, and the two allies went back to their old ways. As one author observed, the Japan-US alliance spend most of the later part of the 1990s on “bureaucratic autopilot.”<sup>4</sup>

—— Following 9/11, the alliance has again become tighter. Partially driven by the needs of the so-called “War on Terror” and partially owed to the personal friendship between President George W. Bush and former Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro, the alliance not only found a new vitality, but also spurred Japan to undertake some much-needed upgrades of its SDF. While recognizing the importance of the existing partnership, many American policymakers have begun to call for political and military normalization of Japan and for an alliance based less on Japan’s continued reliance on the United States and more on a common understanding of equality between the two nations. As Richard Lowry observes,

Japan has slowly been emerging from its shell over the last decade, and it is one of the diplomatic triumphs of the Bush administration that it has helped accelerate this process, strengthening the US-Japanese bond and enhancing its usefulness. The Japanese will proceed at their own pace, but our response to every step they take toward becoming a more “normal” country should be nothing but encouragement: “More, please.” The goal...should be to make Japan as a reliable partner of the US in Asia as Britain is in Europe.<sup>5</sup>

A role for the United States in facilitating Japan’s transition to a “normal” nation is not without its critics. In the United States, many feel that an independent Japan would be less compliant to American strategic goals. Others feel that an independent Japan

<sup>4</sup> Kurt M. Campbell, “Energizing the US-Japan Security Partnership,” *Washington Quarterly* 23, no. 4 (Autumn 2000): 125.

<sup>5</sup> Richard Lowry, “Time for the Sun to Rise,” *National Review*, July 4, 2005, 29.

could become a powerful rival to the United States in Asia. Robert Ross writes,

Japan's buildup [following a US military withdraw] could lead to US-Japan conflict. Unlike in the US-China relations, US and Japanese capabilities could become competitive – between two maritime powers an offensive strike can be decisive, as Japan almost showed at Pearl Harbor. As long as the United States remains fully engaged, Japan's navy complements US power. But should Washington share naval power with Tokyo, it will likely create security dilemma pressures.<sup>6</sup>

Ross holds that American presence in Japan helps to stave off a potential rival for regional hegemony. Although there may be some merit to this view, it falls short as an objection to Japan's development of an independent foreign policy in a number of ways. First, it is highly unlikely that Japan would attempt any kind of massive military buildup, or even power-projection capabilities that would threaten its long time ally, the United States. As was discussed above, Japan's actions in the field of remilitarization have been largely symbolic efforts to advance the role of the Japanese nation on the world stage. Massive remilitarization would be received with a great deal of hostility by many members of the international community, and, therefore, is unlikely to occur anytime soon.

Second, Ross's objection presumes that the status quo will be maintained in the Asia for a long time to come. As many analysts have pointed out, Japan's antimilitarism is conditional, and would likely change were the neighborhood to become hostile and the United States to waver in its security guarantee. Given the unpredictable nature of the DPRK and the major arms buildup currently being undertaken by the PRC, it may well be in the interests of the United States to have a militarily strong ally in the region. Given that American troops are currently bogged down in the Middle East and Afghanistan,

<sup>6</sup> Robert S. Ross, "The Geography of the Peace: East Asia in the Twenty-First Century," *International Security* 23, no. 4 (Spring 1999): 116.

Japan, with a standing military capable of being deployed outside Japanese territorial waters, could help the United States to maintain the status quo in Asia.

Another criticism of Japan's military and political normalization is found in Asia. Former Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Kwan Yew once famously compared the remilitarization of Japan to giving chocolate liqueurs to a recovering alcoholic. Such a statement, while providing good political fodder in Asia, is quite wide of the mark. First, it implies that Japan will once again undertake some form of its colonial adventures of the Pacific War era. This is very unlikely. Colonialism was in vogue at the time of the Pacific War and was considered by many to be the hallmark of a great power. Following World War I, colonialism began to fall out of favor among the great powers, but the Japanese were determined to have their place in the sun just as the other powers had. There were a number of other factors playing into this phenomenon, including the economic depression which hit the islands in 1927, but the primary impetus for the colonial adventures was the popularity of the nationalist discourse and the militaristic goals it espoused. The end result of Japan's colonialism was further economic collapse, as many of the colonies quickly proved unprofitable, and defeat and occupation at the hands of the United States military. Defeat, as was explained in chapter 4, brought about a new paradigm in Japanese politics and society, as it demonstrated to the Japanese the superiority of Western ideals and disproved the efficacy of militarism in attaining great power status in the international community. Since that time, Japan has become a parliamentary democracy, adopting human rights rhetoric as if it were a first language, and is committed to becoming a responsible member of the international community. Therefore, it seems highly unlikely that Japan would jeopardize all its economic

endeavors and international good will to undertake expensive and unpopular colonial expeditions with the intent to rebuild the Japanese empire.

Second, those in Asia who are the most vocal critics of a resurgent Japan are those who have the most to lose politically. The most vocal critics of Japan continue to be the PRC and the Republic of Korea (ROK). They have the most to lose from Japan's international resurgence and are quick to condemn any perceived misstep on the part of Tokyo. Most of the countries of Southeast Asia seem willing to accept the leadership of Japan in economic affairs of the region and the country's help in matters of international security, though they are reluctant to fully embrace Japanese leadership, as it may anger an increasingly powerful China. Often, scholars who study Asia seem to mistake the problems of history and saving face for *realpolitik*. Japan unquestionably committed a number of wartime atrocities during the Pacific War, yet the constant badgering about the Japanese war record on the part of the PRC and the ROK are not helping regional stability. These criticisms of Japan, launched when it is politically expedient to do so, play to nationalistic sentiments in the PRC and ROK to bolster the domestic legitimacy of their troubled and corrupt regimes.

The criticisms of the PRC and the ROK notwithstanding, it is in the best interests of the United States to help Japan become a politically and militarily normal nation. The ultimate goal of the United States in the region should be to advocate greater autonomy for the Japanese, encouraging Tokyo's push toward full normalization. The Japanese have long sought for their country to be recognized as a world power in its own right, a desire constantly frustrated by the fact that Japan remains under the paternalistic shadow of the United States. The goals of the nationalist discourse are that Japan be recognized

on the international scene as a world power, not only economically, but politically and militarily as well. So long as the United States continues to dominate Japanese security and foreign policy, however, the discourse will become more frustrated. The potential for reactionary Japanese policies increases the longer the discourse is frustrated, and, in this case, it is likely that more radical ideas in Japanese politics would gain in stature. The rise of ultra-nationalism in the 1930s was due in part to frustration of the nationalist discourse, both politically (actions by the American and British governments) and economically (the depression of 1927). If the resurgence of the nationalist discourse is again frustrated, it is entirely possible that Japan could again move toward radical and unpopular policies. Were the United States to encourage Japan's normalization, the country would gain greater recognition – which it deserves, given its economic and political roles to the international community—while also being forced to take on many additional responsibilities of being a great power. The United States, in return, could free up many of its security forces while retaining a reliable, and strengthened, partner in Asia. Given that problems are ever brewing throughout Asia, a strong, reliable ally with enhanced military capabilities and political prestige would be of enormous assistance to the United States.

Although this thesis has examined the intersection of culture and national security, a number of questions remain unanswered, which should be the focus of future study. For one, there is the question of the relationship between Japanese political antimilitarism and popular pacifism. Many commentators contend that Japan's reluctance to use force is quite conditional, based upon the continued presence of American troops and the maintenance of regional stability. However, few scholars have

attempted to undertake a rigorous examination of this assumption, even though pacifism appears to be deeply ingrained within a large segment of the populace at large. As is often noted, Japan is the only country to have suffered nuclear attacks; the scars left by the attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki remain quite deeply embedded in the Japanese psyche. Yet, it is unclear to what extent contemporary generations continue to be influenced by the experience of the war and by the immediate postwar generations who developed a deep distrust of Japan's military.

Another area of study that deserves attention is the examination of the acceptance of a standing, normalized military by the Japanese people. While there have been a number of polls questioning people about their feelings on the issue, no one seems to have undertaken a serious sociological inquiry into cultural attitudes toward the reinstitution of a conventional military. In America, the military is treated with a great deal of respect and deference by the populace at large. Often, military service on a resume is an exceptional advantage for an applicant. In Japan, following the Pacific War, the Japanese military lost a great deal of respect among the people. Nevertheless, the generation that lived through the war and the postwar years has begun to die off, leaving younger generations with no first-hand experience of the era. Thus, an examination of popular opinion among younger generations of Japanese would be most fascinating, especially if placed into a context of historical comparison. The investigator could examine news articles, popular literature, plays, and television shows, and interview both SDF personnel and members of the general public to identify any shifts in attitudes over the years.

Finally, a sociological inquiry into the attitudes toward Japan's normalization

among the common people of other regional countries could be very revealing. This would be an exceptionally difficult task to undertake, particularly in the PRC and the DPRK, where government propaganda and censorship are rife. Penetrating beyond government bias would likely be very difficult, to be sure. However, it would be interesting to see what the opinion truly is toward Japan's international political and military normalization, both on the ground among general publics, and also among mid-level bureaucrats. Much of what passes for public opinion regarding Japan in these societies appears to be greatly skewed by the rhetoric of high-level politicians. A serious inquiry into the attitudes of the general publics and mid-level political functionaries in East Asian countries could help all interested parties to better understand the potential for Japan's future role in the region.



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